

NorthStar News

The Newsletter of NorthStar Soccer Ministries



STIRRING ONE ANOTHER UP! BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PAUL NEVILLE

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NORTHSTAR SOCCER MINISTRIES promotes opportunities for investment in the lives of urban youth in Birmingham by providing a high quality Soccer Club within a holistic, Christian environment.

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What do you see when you look at this picture? Two players on the same team—a boy and a girl with a youth referee keeping pace? Maybe, like me, you see the girl without the ball in too close. Needs to spread out for the pass. That takes coaching—and **we need coaches!**

I know these children and their families and I see much more. All three just happen to be among our top athletes with tremendous potential. The picture is a NorthStar Intramural League game. I am encouraging the girl in purple to move over to our Girls Travel Team program and I am trying to identify and recruit enough boys to form a U9 boys Travel Team with this boy as a key player.

The referee? Amazing story. Only her third season playing and her skills have soared. She soaks up every opportunity I am able to send to her to develop. She leads by example on the field and is a GREAT team player (a key player in the team story on page 4). I have a good idea for how to help her develop in the spring and am looking ahead to the team she needs to be on in the fall and beyond. She will outgrow NorthStar and I am working on a plan for that as well.

But more than that is her heart. She is always

eager to help with clean up after practices and wants to learn how everything is done so she can help better. She recently—out of the blue—told me that she had started selling candy at school to raise money for NorthStar ‘because you do so much for me.’

When I realized that **Hebrews 10:24** should be our theme verse, my experience with this girl was very much in my mind. YOU, no matter your soccer experience, have something to give when you volunteer time with NorthStar. But it is not a one way street. When you give your time you are a mirror reflecting back what God has given you. *And*, you will have your own experiences like I have with this girl. Humbling experiences in which you realize that the one you came to serve just might be more generous and service oriented in her heart than you are. She has something to teach us. Are you ready for that experience? The door is open!

Paul Neville

NorthStar Celebration! - 2019

On November 14 approximately 120 people gathered to Celebrate another year of using soccer as a tool to mentor youth. Thanks!

The highlights from this year’s Celebration were:

- Introducing the new *NorthStar Navigator* award and honoring our two inaugural recipients: **Raymond Butler & Michelle Chambers.**
- Hearing live from Birmingham native and Forward for the Birmingham Legion FC—Chandler Hoffman.
- Volunteer coaches/mentors, players & parents, sponsors & supporters all mingling together and reflecting on the *connections* made over the year that were helping all of us to ‘consider how to stir up one another to love and good works’ (Hebrews 10:24)

Special Thanks to our Event Sponsors who helped make the evening a success!

Premier Event Sponsors were: A-1 Products and Ingram Equipment



Kids who were present were able to receive one of these Legion Posters featuring Chandler and autographed by him. It was a highlight to those kids.

Chandler challenged the kids with the reality that the most successful athlete can be out in a moment through injury and will suffer setback. He challenged them to a life of faith above all else.

Chandler also shared from his own life the impact others had made on him through simple acts of kindness. What steps are each of us taking to connect with kids (and each other) through taking time to show kindness and to mentor. THANKS CHANDLER!

Goal! Sponsors were:

- Business Planning Inc.
- Raymond & Claudia Butler
- Teneasha Washington

Table Sponsors were:

- American Computer Consultants
- Aviation Services Group
- Don Murphy
- Sparkhound
- Shades Valley Community Church

Many others supported the effort by purchasing a table or individual tickets or making contributions of various amounts. Thanks Sponsors!

The NorthStar Navigator Award

What is it?

The 'NorthStar Navigator' award is for individuals who have given considerable time and energy over many years to the cause of mentoring youth. For the individuals chosen for the Inaugural Award, mentoring youth and encouraging people is such a core, lifestyle commitment that NorthStar Soccer is only one avenue for them.

Why Give this Award?

There are three reasons to give this award:

- We think these individuals don't receive enough recognition for the quiet work they do. We want to acknowledge and encourage them.
- We hope that holding up these honorees as examples will inspire us all to 'consider how to stir one another up to love and good works.' *Hebrews 10:24*
- Giving this award helps NorthStar stay focused on our mission. We want to provide excellent soccer training and team opportunities for youth who might not receive it otherwise. We think this has value by itself. But, we want to go beyond that and for a great soccer program to be a tool to encourage spiritual faith and develop character in youth.

About the Name

The 'North Star' is a directional beacon used for navigation. 'Navigators' are individuals with knowledge who spend time helping others to develop skills and find their direction!



Raymond Butler

At the banquet in November Raymond was introduced by Chad Hartley—who was coached by Raymond for several years starting around age 12 at Briarwood Soccer Club. Chad went on to become a volunteer himself with NorthStar his freshman year at Birmingham-Southern College. His senior year he became Raymond's assistant coach with the *first ever* NorthStar competitive level team.

During most of those years Raymond was on the Board of NorthStar, some years he also coached with NorthStar and most years he was coaching at Briarwood Soccer Club and mentoring youth like Chad through the process. In 2016—the year Chad joined him as an Assistant Coach—Raymond was coaching both a 2005 birth year Briarwood boys team and this 2005 birth year NorthStar team at the same time and enriching the experience for all by scheduling some joint practices, scrimmages, player sharing between the teams and social events. Raymond continued to coach that team until mid season 2018 when he had some health issues



that made it difficult. *But*, he returned in Fall 2019 to coach a brand new U11 NorthStar team (and simultaneously to mentor another young coach.

Birmingham Bash tournament 2016—Raymond giving out championship medals to team members after they took first place in their division!

Michelle Chambers

Michelle connected with NorthStar as a parent when her two girls were students at Princeton Elementary School. She quickly came forward as a reliable team parent going beyond team manager to

help NorthStar staff provide the best program possible for all the kids. So much so that we invited her to become the Club Registrar and to Coordinator for parent volunteering. For a time Michelle also served on the Board of NorthStar. When she first started with NorthStar Michelle was also PTA President at Princeton Elementary. She is very active in her church (6th Avenue Baptist) and is a youth ministry leader there. At the banquet Michelle was, quite appropriately, introduced by her younger daughter who is following in her footsteps of volunteering and mentoring youth!

Season Wrap up—Highlight on U12 Girls Team

Two days after the NorthStar Celebration banquet we had 3 teams in the Alabama Soccer Showdown (tournament sponsored by Vestavia Soccer Club). In the weeks between the regular soccer season ending and this tournament I remember wondering if I had made a good decision.

Being in tournament meant that I had to make sure administrative details were handled for all three teams *and* I had to plan out practices to maximize preparation for the U12 girls team that I directly coach. All of that while simultaneously trying to put lots of energy into planning for our annual banquet—NorthStar Celebration. Maybe it was too much? Maybe my girls weren't ready to be in a tournament anyway (we had lost all our games in the season—which was not what I had expected on the front end).

But, we had really good practices those weeks. I worked on a few position changes and strategy adjustments. We took a 1-0 lead in our first game but ended up tying 1-1. Lost 4-0 in game 2 against the eventual champion (a couple of their goals were flubs for us, on the field it was a competitive game). And then game #3. We scored quickly on a picture perfect drive down the sideline, pass to the middle, not open for shot but fed it to teammate (girl featured on the front page) who put a zinger into the back of the net! But, we couldn't score again. Second half our opponent scored on us. Looked like we were headed for a tie—which would have knocked us out of 2nd place. Multiple shots but couldn't score. Finally, with less than five minutes to go, our number one goal scorer found the back of the net. Girls held on to that lead and earned their second place medals! OK, it was not State Cup. Just a recreational bracket in a small tournament. But they did it! They were thrilled and I was quite proud of them. The accomplishment, the enthusiasm and the sense of mastery on some team tactics we had been working on—all give us good material to work with and build on for the next season!

Paul Neville



Above—one of our two top ball handlers. I moved her to a midfield wing position for the final game and she was tough to stop bringing the ball down the sideline!

Below—Showing her hard work and determination, moves like this eventually opened the way for this girl to score the winning goal in the final game!



NorthStar Christmas Party

A special thanks to **6th Avenue Baptist Church** for opening their facility for us for the NorthStar Christmas party. Church members also provided cakes for the cake walk! We had an expert face painter! Kids also enjoyed cookie decorating and ornament making. Thanks to the volunteers who gave their time—on Giving Tuesday—to make it happen for the kids!



HIGHLIGHTS ON THE 2020 SCHEDULE

- December 30-31, 2019—NorthStar Travel Team players participating in Holiday Camp hosted by our partner, Briarwood Soccer Club
- January—weekly skill training for selected Travel Team players—based on interest, availability and number of skill trainers available
- January 11-12—Current and former NorthStar players participating in the Mike Getman college ID soccer camp.
- January—date to be announced—Spring coaching training sessions
- January 27—Field Sponsor deadline—get your company on a field sponsor banner and help make the season possible!
- February 3—Travel Team practices begin
- February 18—Intramural Team practices begin
- May 14—Spring Award Banquet for players
- May—Fall Travel Team Evaluations
- June 8—Team Sponsor deadline
- July 27—Team Camps for Travel Teams
- August 1—first ever—NorthStar Jamboree—event for teams from all soccer clubs across the metro area
- August 25—Intramural Team practices begin
- November 12—NorthStar Celebration!

2020 Volunteer Opportunities!



'Good Games' Can't Happen without Good Volunteers

NorthStar is currently looking for volunteers to fill the following positions. If interested, please email Paul Neville at paul@northstarsoccerministries.org or call us at (205) 322-9296 by Sunday, January 9th.

- Travel Team Head Coach
- Intramural Team Head Coach
- Assistant Coach
- Soccer Van Driver
- Practice Site Coordinator

The interest in NorthStar Soccer in the communities we serve exceeds our current capacity. We have fields lined up. We have equipment. We have our Intramural League structure. The biggest thing holding us back from serving more kids is volunteer capacity. WE NEED YOU! Yes, you with your soccer experience. We need you to be a coach or assistant coach with Travel Teams or Skills Coaching. Maybe you have experience and knowledge but are not sure about the time commitment? We need coaches who are reliable but if we know your limitations on the front end we can design an experience that matches your schedule and allows you to contribute. Yes, we also need you with your limited or no soccer experience but a love for kids and a desire to mentor. We have quality practice plans and a structure in which you can contribute well if you are ready to commit the time!

- 'Travel Team' coaches must have soccer experience and head coaches should be willing to work toward minimal coaching license requirements. Practices will be Monday plus either Wednesday or Thursday evenings starting the first week of February.
- Intramural teams will practice on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning February 18. Coaches for the Hemphill Elementary teams at 3:00 is a *big* need. West (Legion Field) and East (Cornerstone Elementary in Woodlawn) practices are at 5:30 and coaches are needed for those times as well. Soccer experience is helpful for Intramural coaches but not required. We will provide training, practice plan, oversight and devotional material.
- Support volunteers are also critical—van drivers and Site Coordinators (great job for those who want to help but not coach!)

Highlighting New Staff—Kristen Shircliff

In August Kristen Shircliff joined the staff of NorthStar—doubling our full time staff from 1 to 2! Kristen was hired as Marketing & Communication Coordinator (yes, the graphic on page 6 is her handiwork!) but told to expect some time directly in programs as well. With the season already underway and a shortage of coaches . . .

This fall I was blessed with the opportunity to coach the Hemphill U10 team as well as be the Soccer Van driver for kids in the Princeton after school program. At first, I wasn't sure how I felt about coaching being that I am pretty new to soccer. That said, I never could have dreamed of the impact that my players would have on me. It has been a long time since I volunteered to coach children, and these kiddos never disappointed me. Every practice, no matter the weather and no matter what their day had been like, they came out and gave it their best. They were always happy to see me and they were always motivated and willing to learn. With all the things happening in the world and in their lives, these kids still have such wonderful dreams and aspirations for their future. It made me take a step back and really look at my own dreams and aspirations.

As I continue to reflect, I realize that NorthStar is the type of organization I want to be invested in. I want to work with kids and help them to achieve their dreams. They are so outpouring in their love for one another and it's truly inspiring. Coaching and driving kids to practice quickly became a highlight to my day. No matter what the frustrations and complications were in my life, they disappeared as soon as I stepped onto the soccer field.



Kristen (far left, back row) with U10 Hemphill Team—Fall 2019

I encourage anyone who feels they are being called in life to serve, to answer the calling. Giving just a little of your time and energy not only impacts those around you, but really gives a sense of purpose to your own life. It inspires hope and it inspires joy. That is what has led me to joy and fulfillment in my life and I truly believe that it yields the type of joy that God has always planned on us to have. With that, I thank you and pray for blessings and joy to you this Christmas Season.

Best Wishes!
Kristen Shircliff

WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY

Not yet ready to give your time? Already giving your time but want to add contributing financially?

NorthStar parents pay a small fee. Some could pay more (we encourage them to also become contributors). Most can only afford the small fee we charge. Many receive scholarship to cover even our small fees. Currently NorthStar receives no government funding and very little by way of major Foundation or Corporate funding. We depend on sponsorships from small businesses, monthly contributions from a few churches, and a variety of contributions of all sizes from individuals—just like you. Without that support opportunities for youth described in this newsletter and on our website would not exist.

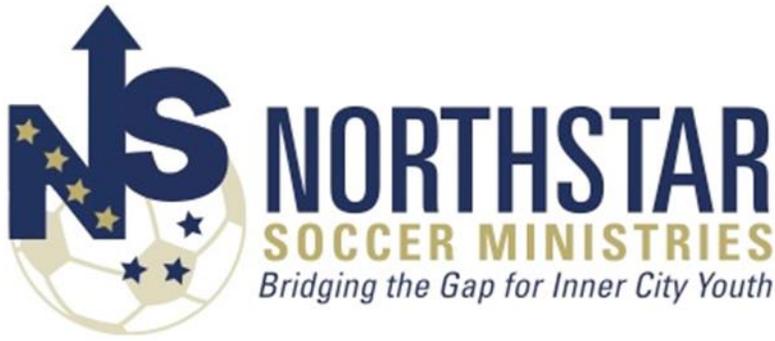
Your volunteer time and your financial support make the

programs possible.

The envelope and response card included with this newsletter are a great way for you **to send us a donation by check** (we love checks because there is no processing fee for us to receive them).

The graphic on the outside highlights an **online giving** alternative. There is a processing fee for these gifts but we love this option because it is convenient for you and easy to share—which is how you help us maximize the impact of small gifts.

You can also find a donate now button on our **website** which will allow you to donate through paypal. Whatever option you choose we hope you will join us to help us reach our year-end giving goal of 1,000 contributors!



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IS NORTHSTAR ON YOUR HOLIDAY GIVING LIST?



The graphic to the left is currently circulating on our Facebook page. Help us spread it! To finish 2019 well and be in good shape to roll out programs in 2020 we need a strong December financially. We are counting on some larger gifts to average out the smaller ones. But, these suggested amounts will get us where we need to be *if* we reach our goal for number of contributors. Give any amount you are able to give *and share* the opportunity with others. Help us reach our goal of 1,000 contributors.

Hopefully many of those new contributors will also become volunteers, giving their time! Open up to read about the impact of volunteering and for details on the opportunities.