

Organization seeks to give foster kids a sporting chance

Gulf Breeze, Fla. (Jan. 12, 2022) – Tiger Point Sports Association, an organization that promotes recreational sports programs at Tiger Point Park, has just launched a first-of-its-kind program to help foster kids in Santa Rosa County participate in youth sports.

Tiger Point Sports Association president, Phillip Godwin, said the program, part of a partnership with Gulf Coast Foster Bridge, aims to cover participation and equipment costs through community support.

“Youth sports have a tremendous impact on children,” said Godwin. “Through sports, children make friends and memories that last a lifetime. Unfortunately, many foster families are unable to afford the cost of registration and equipment to participate. Creating opportunities for foster children and families in our area to play sports is achievable when we come together as a community. As a youth sports organization, we can think of no better way to live our vision and purpose than this initiative.”

Becky Slaymaker, Executive Director of Gulf Coast Foster Bridge, said the need in our area is great, and foster families are overwhelmed.

“There are about 100 kids in foster care in Santa Rosa County alone,” said Slaymaker. “Many of our foster families have 3 to 4 foster kids in their homes, in addition to their own children. So many of those children have wanted to participate in sports but the stipend from the state is not enough to cover the costs.”

The state provides a stipend of about \$13 per day per child for all living expenses. The cost to participate in the recreational league — including equipment — is more than \$100 per sport per child.

Slaymaker, who sits on the board of the Tiger Point Sports Association with Godwin, approached the board with the idea to ask the community to help sponsor foster families.

“Phillip did not hesitate,” said Slaymaker. “When I told him of our need, his company, SESCO Lighting, stepped up to be the first to participate — with a few more coming forward to help, we can make sure every foster family has the opportunity to participate in sports.”

Foster mom Tiffany Cross said the cost of caring for foster children continues to increase.

“As a foster family, we have 4 – 6 kids on any given day,” said Cross “and some families have 6 – 9 kids. With the cost of everything skyrocketing, it’s harder to put kids in sports and other extracurricular activities. These kids deserve to participate just as much as any others but with groceries, utilities and other expenses, normal foster families are tapped. We know sports are so important for kids’ developing self-esteem, learning responsibility, respect for authority and learning teamwork. Also, it provides another positive adult role model for the child.”

Tiger Point Sports Association has been improving Tiger Point Park for the community, and now turns to the community for help with making sports attainable for these foster families. Santa Rosa County Commissioner Colten Wright said sports can be life-changing for children.

“I applaud Tiger Point Sports Association and Gulf Coast Foster Bridge for joining to bring disadvantaged children into the Tiger Point recreation leagues,” said Commissioner Wright. “Many area residents are unaware of how many foster families struggle to pay for their children to participate in extra-curricular activities. Helping families and their children pay for fees and equipment will allow children to play sports, learn social skills and team dynamics, and build their self-confidence — preparing them for success in their adult life. “

To sponsor a foster child in sports, please visit: <https://www.tpsports.net/>. For more information about sponsoring a foster child, visit <https://www.tpsports.net/> or mail admin@tpsports.net

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Tiger Point Sports Association (TPSA) is a not-for-profit corporation whose purpose is to organize, administer and facilitate recreational sports programs, with primary emphasis on youth recreation. TPSA manages the premises and various associated athletic fields at Tiger Point Park under agreement with Santa Rosa County.

<https://www.tpsports.net>

Gulf Coast Foster Bridge’s mission is to surround foster children with support, love, faith and guidance by bridging the gap between foster families, biological families and our community.

<https://www.gcfosterbridge.org>