



Rush Pikes Peak hosted their first annual R.E.A.C.H (Rush Equipment Assisting Children) Day on October 3. Please see below for an article from Rush Pikes Peak R.E.A.C.H. Coordinator Polly Fiedler.

Rush Equipment Assisting Children, that is what REACH stands for, and it does exactly that and so much more.

This program started in 2002 with Virginia Rush, and the next year was greatly expanded within the whole club with coordination from the national office in Denver. With Donna Pettigrew at the helm, they collected 10,000 pieces of soccer equipment to donate to struggling Rush teams that first year, 2003. In 2004, 5 tons of equipment were shipped to Iraq in conjunction with the military and General Petraeus. The military delivered it overseas. Since then, REACH has shipped equipment to Afghanistan, South Africa, Mexico, Thailand, Mali, Ghana, Kenya, Haiti, South Africa, Togo, Gambia, Cameroon, and Senegal. For children who struggle with getting an education and housing and food, having their own soccer team and uniform and equipment is huge for their self-esteem.

Recently we have realized an even more far-reaching effect of this program. There is a prostitution kidnapping scheme that occurs in South Africa. You can see a video of this on YouTube called "Lost Soccer Boys". Supposed agents approach families saying they will take their sons to Europe and put them on a reputable team in exchange for thousands of dollars. Then the boys are no longer heard of and prostituted. They are finding that this is decreasing just by the mere presence of Rush teams in South Africa because now the boys have somewhere to play at home and do not need to look outside of their country.

In addition, the military has chosen REACH as its charitable organization to do its last big goodwill effort in Afghanistan before pulling out in 2014.

This November 2012, Rush ambassadors, players who help with this program, have an opportunity to go to South Africa to do volunteer work there for kids from 6-13 years of age in an orphanage in a poor suburb of Durban, South Africa. The ambassadors will help with coaching education, put on a soccer tournament for the kids, hold a soccer camp for them, and participate in a Children's Festival, which is a special day like Christmas for these children that occurs yearly. There will be three ambassadors from Colorado Springs going, all from Brian Lux's U16G Nike team, Stephanie

Deines, Amy Gargala, and Jenna Hartley. This is an amazing opportunity for the ambassadors as well as the kids in Africa.

We will also be having our first REACH Day here in the Springs for the developmental teams to collect gear and raise awareness about REACH on October 3rd. There will be a soccer tournament as well as a BBQ in exchange for bringing used soccer gear.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: We collect used gear (clean and shoes tied together and balls deflated please) at the office all year long. There is a box there. In addition, there is the Used Uniform for Credit program. When your team orders new uniforms, you can turn in you old uniform for a \$20 credit to your team account. Be sure to ask your team manager about it or contact Polly Fiedler at pollyfiedler@comcast.net, 719-444-0141.