

# Faith Based and Community Initiatives



USDA  
National  
Nutrition  
Education  
Program

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

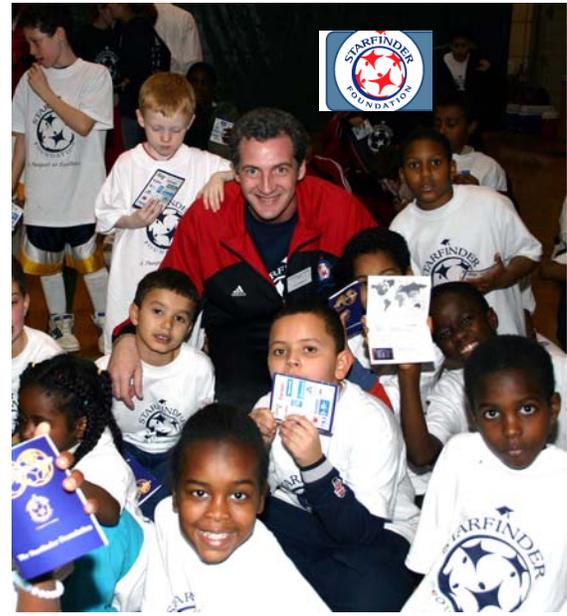
## The Starfinder Foundation

The Summer Food Service Program

### A Story of Success.

“Throughout the summer we hold weeklong camps where children can have fun learning through soccer. Kids love to just run around and play soccer but no sooner had the games begun we noticed many of the children tiring quickly.” At first, the staff joked with the kids about not being fit. “But when some of the children complained of aching stomachs”, explained Tony, “we asked what they had eaten for breakfast and most replied ‘nothing.’ That’s when staff from the FNS Mid-Atlantic Region stepped in and changed hungry children into happy campers by helping to provide breakfast, lunch and snacks for everyone.”

Through their efforts fresh sandwiches, fruit, milk, educational materials, and training on the importance of good nutrition was provided. This combination had a profound affect on the children and Tony realized that “we could see a noticeable difference in the children's ability to learn from and enjoy the camp once they had eaten and the complaints turned to compliments.”



## **How the Initiative is Helping.**

After hearing about the Food & Nutrition Service through the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI) liaison this past year, Starfinder contacted the Mid-Atlantic regional office to find out how they could help feed their hungry children.

After an initial meeting at Starfinder's Philadelphia office, Tony and the FNS FBCI liaison felt that there would be more opportunity to learn about FNS nutrition assistance programs through a visit to the regional office. This would afford him an opportunity to talk directly with the seasoned FNS staff about matching the many programs that Starfinder offers with appropriate feeding programs. And, at the very least, Tony could share his vision of good health through nutrition and physical activity.

“During our visit to the Mid-Atlantic regional offices we were really encouraged by the positive energy shown towards helping the children in our programs.”

This initial meeting led to more contacts and activities, including direct participation by FNS regional staff in the Starfinder “Passport to Excellence” program held at Drexel University where nutrition education and healthful activities were presented to eager participants. More importantly, nutritious meals were provided to the children through the extensive cooperation of staff from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the School District of Philadelphia Division of Food Services.

## **Contact.**

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## **The Organization.**

Through an exciting partnership with the USDA Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) Mid-Atlantic Region, the Starfinder Foundation is providing hundreds of soccer-hungry youngsters in Philadelphia with healthy meals through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). They also provide FNS educational materials on how to eat smart so they can play hard. The Starfinder Foundation is a dynamic non-profit organization based in Philadelphia that uses soccer as a hook to develop children's attitude, character and leadership. Starfinder founder Tony Williams summed up the goal of the foundation, "We are teaching the children that values are more important than victories and we are stressing the importance of integrity."

## **Mission.**

To create inspirational learning environments where children are encouraged through soccer to develop strong moral character, strive for academic excellence and live with a positive attitude, regardless of their socio-economic status.

## **Stats.**

USDA-FNS Program:

*Summer Food Service Program*

Number of Clients:

*180 Children served,  
Ages 6-12*

Over time, the partnership between FNS and Starfinder has now expanded to their “Learning through Soccer” after school program, where the FNS “Eat Smart, Play Hard” curriculum is now being integrated. The Power Panther, the FNS mascot, will have an opportunity to make special guest appearances at Starfinder’s “Passport to Excellence” days giving children help understanding how diet and nutrition play an important role in improving their performance both on the soccer field and in the classroom.

The people at Starfinder are hoping to create a Model of Excellence with the Food & Nutrition Service that can then be replicated with other federal agencies will create “win – win” partnerships that could nourish the growth of soccer opportunities for urban youth across the United States. Having nutritious meals available as well as nutrition education activities is a great start. According to Tony Williams, “The staff of the Mid-Atlantic region has done everything they said they would and as a result we have hundreds of happy children energized and able to play and learn.”