

Active Kids, Healthy Kids

Successful Story

Program Name: Golddigger Girls Softball

Sponsor Organization: Golddiggers Girls Softball Association

Description of Activity/program: The Golddiggers Girls Softball Association provides girls aged 7 -14 with a safe, healthy, and fun athletic environment to have fun and promotes the spirit of fair play and good sportsmanship. Approximately 72 girls from the Eastern shore area (Lawrencetown, Mineville, Lake Echo, Porters Lake and surrounding areas) will be involved in the summer of 2004.

Program/Activity Setting: Community, outdoor, school, recreation

Target Group: Girls 7 - 14

Contact: Grant MacDonald

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Program costs: \$60 league fees (includes costs for insurance and equipment)

Funding sources: fees + contributions from partners (partner contributions go towards t-shirts, hats and equipment)

Partners: local businesses such as R & R Kinsman's Auto Salvage, Precision Small Engine Repair, Triple A Grocery – Lake Echo, Tim Hortons, Wendys, Advantage Courier, R & F Auto, Glenn Ford Auto, Lawrencetown Grocery and Woodpecker Cabinets.

Strategies for Sustainability: Each of the 10 partners contributes \$200. There is also a \$60 registration fee. Any excess money is used towards an end of season party and other supplies for the league and players.

Impact of program: Other leagues in the area were co-ed. Registration by girls in these programs is very low. Girls often get intimidated when playing sports with boys. Girls tend to be more social and generally speaking would rather play sports with other girls. This is the second season for the program. Last year 48 girls played on four teams. This year it has expanded to 72 girls on six teams. Parents and the community are involved

through coaching, contributing financially or coming to watch the kids play. There has been a definite increase in skills in the game. This increases the confidence of the girls.

Key elements towards success: The community is involved in many ways from coaching to driving kids to practice and games, to contributing to equipment costs. Because they take a fair play approach, all girls get an equal chance to play all the positions in the game so learn a broad range of skills, and get an equal amount of time on the field (not sitting on the bench for more than two innings of a game). They also learn all aspects of the game. Practice is run in small groups performing fun drills that teach them softball skills. Parents and the girls are very happy with this approach. Parents are informed of activities through an email distribution list and a newsletter.

Challenges and strategies to meet them: Parents and kids were upset that the kids were not being treated fairly in other leagues and in other sports so Grant MacDonald decided to develop a league that includes fair play rules. Coaches, parents, and players are made aware of the fair play rules at the beginning of the season. A competitive team may be set up for those who want to play fairly but also be competitive. On May 15, the league won the IKON Fair Play Award from Sport Nova Scotia.

Length and Stage of Project: This will be the leagues' second season.