

# Dream of fields becomes reality

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After 14 years of selling candy, subs, cheesecakes, candles, the Susquenita Area Soccer Youth (SASY) players and parents are enjoying the fruits of their labor as their longtime dream becomes a reality.

SASY opened its 2007 soccer program using the fields at their new soccer park at the Perry County Recreation Association (PCRA) facility off of Dellville Road, Duncannon.

“It has been a long journey,” said Dale Moyer, soccer volunteer and SASY board member.

The fields are alive with activity where kids under 6 shoot goals on three U6 fields, kids ages 6 and 7 play on two U8 fields and kids ages 8 and 9 dribble the length of a full-size U10 field.

“On Saturdays this parking lot is full of vehicles with parents coming and going for games scheduled from 9 a.m. to noon,” said Moyer.

For Moyer, originally from Berks County where soccer was the number-one sport, seeing area kids finally playing on fields designed for the sport of soccer is very satisfying.

“All of the fields the kids previously played on were multipurpose areas, at best, and were not dedicated to playing soccer,” said Moyer.

SASY, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, began in 1994 with four people who wanted to see youth soccer have a place in the community. They sent flyers home to parents through the Susquenita elementary schools announcing the formation of SASY and ended up with 312 kids registered the first year.

When Moyer came on board a year or two later, he suggested that SASY begin to set aside some money from its fund-raising activities each year toward the future.

Last year, with \$85,000 in the budget, the volunteer board of parents of current and past players began to explore the idea of a soccer complex.

“It has been our dream to have a place we can call home and to know that whenever anyone in the area wants to go out and kick a soccer ball around that they have a place to play,” said Moyer.

The organization looked into buying ground, but knew their budget would not stretch far enough to both purchase and develop a piece of land.

Then, in 2005, PCRA offered to allow SASY to build a soccer park on their land in Penn Twp.

“It’s a beautiful location that has allowed SASY to use their money to prepare the fields and start building a concession stand,” said Moyer. “PCRA has been wonderful to our youth organization and we can’t thank them enough.”

“We’re for anything that has to do with kids,” said PCRA president Bill Stone. “We have a close relationship with SASY.”

The field now being used by SASY originally was going to be a girls’ softball field, according to Stone, so the idea of turning it into athletic fields seemed like a natural fit. “I see a lot of kids up on the hill playing soccer.”

PCRA also saw the partnership as a way to bring some exposure to what the rest of the park has to offer.

“We have a pool and campground and enjoy hosting Scout groups and day camps,” said Stone. “Still, if the partnership doesn’t do another thing than provide a place for kids to have fun and exercise, it’s worth it.”

The two organizations have already found their joint adventure to be beneficial by supporting each other in their fund-raising events.

With the land no longer an issue, the project got under way. Donating his expertise, Harrisburg engineer Chris Messner, a former Perry County native, applied for the necessary permits.

In spring 2006, excavation began thanks to local heavy equipment operators Brett Barrick, Larry Shearer and Norm Beaver. Their efforts along with those of Todd Kline of Kline Landscaping and Ken Martz of Martz’s Farm, allowed more than four acres to be cleared, leveled and seeded with grass.

The concession stand is a work in progress with a team of volunteers led by Neal Barrick laying 2,000 split-faced block donated by Newport masonry contractor Steven F. Peters.

“We have had so many wonderful people donate their time on the weekends to make this all possible,” said Moyer.

SASY also has begun to excavate for another full-size U10 field, which they hope to have ready to plant with grass in Spring 2008.

When the park is complete, it will consist of up to 11 fields of various sizes for ages 4 through adult.

“Eventually, we should be able to use our fields to make up five full-size fields for use in tournaments,” said Moyer.

SASY and PCRA have a 20-year lease agreement with two continuing 15-year lease extension options.

“This will guarantee a home for current and future soccer players and fans in the Susquenita area for many years,” said Moyer.

The formation of SASY was a huge stepping stone for the future of the sport in the Susquenita School District.

In 1998, the Susquenita High School girls’ program was started, and in 1999 the HAWKROCK soccer club was founded to allow players in U10 through U19 to experience a more competitive soccer environment by entering teams into the Central Penn Youth Soccer League.

The Susquenita Junior High boys’ program was started in 2001, followed by the junior high girls’ program in 2002.

Also in 2002, the Dauphin recreation soccer group joined with SASY and provided fields at Hagy Park in Dauphin.

Presently, the fields are used by 34 teams, 23 from SASY and 11 from Dauphin for a total of 375 kids.

“It has been a lot of work but it’s quite gratifying,” said Moyer. “The key is that it’s for the kids.”

To learn more about SASY, readers may visit the Web site at [www.sasysoccer.com](http://www.sasysoccer.com).