



Putnam Valley MAGMAH's Special Needs Soccer Program

The Putnam Valley MAGMAH program was started in 2013 by a group of six 10th grade PVHS students who wanted to develop a special needs soccer program for the Putnam Valley community.

Madysen Winogradoff * Ashley Volpe * Grace Mazza * Max Martins * Anders Spittal * Harrison Deegan

Current Leaders: **Meredith Conlin * Maddie Deegan * Morgan Winogradoff * Lukas Azcue * Marc Zadrina**

Our Start:

In the spring of 2013 we learned about a program called Backyard Sports Plus. We contacted them and they invited us to visit their sites at Purchase College in Purchase, NY and the Thomas Jefferson Elementary School in Yorktown Heights, NY. During these visits we were able to observe the Backyard Sports Plus program in action. We were also able to meet with some of the program administrators who were happy to answer all of our questions and encouraged us to work on developing a program of our own.

In October 2013 we began developing a program similar to Backyard Sports Plus for the special needs community in and around Putnam Valley.

We met with PVCSD teachers and administrators as well as parent volunteers to get help defining and clarifying our goals.

We enlisted the aid of Putnam Valley school district administrators and faculty in order to secure a site as well as equipment.

We met with Putnam Valley coaches, special education teachers and inclusion specialists from our local YMCA camp to help us to create appropriate lesson plans.

We recruited volunteers and set up volunteer training sessions, with district and community educators and coaches.

We did outreach to the community through our school administrators and teachers and well as the PTA and SEPTA.

About Our Program:

The MAGMAH program focuses on providing special needs children with an opportunity to be physically active in a non-competitive, enjoyable, relaxed environment. Improving social skills while developing soccer skills is the foundation of our program.

We believe providing 1:1 support and guidance is the best way to help our participants to improve their ability to attend to task, follow direction, separate from caretakers and play cooperatively.

We encourage consistent attendance on the part of both the player and the coach as we believe consistency is necessary for success.

We encourage clear and open communication between MAGMAH leaders and parents as this enables us to better know our participants.

How It Works:

We have run 2 one hour sessions for 6 weeks in the fall and 2 one hour sessions for 8 weeks in the spring since the spring of 2014. Our program has grown to serve 25 special needs student athletes each season and we have recruited, trained and supervised approximately 35 volunteers. Recognizing that we are seniors we spent the past year identifying and training our successors: Meredith Conlin, Maddie Deegan, Morgan Winogradoff, Lukas Azcue & Marc Zadrina

Our Hope:

We are hopeful that the program will continue to grow and to provide local special needs children with an opportunity to make new friends and feel connected to the larger community. We believe every child should have a place to play where they feel safe and are therefore willing to take risks and try new things. We want every child to have a chance to just be "one of the guys"; to have a sense of belonging; to just have fun.

Please contact one of the parent coordinators if you have any questions:

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