

Message from the President. Santa Dan Brings Donuts and Cheer.



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Using Soccer to Inspire and Empower

Message from the President

2015 was another successful year for the VSSL.

It has been a pleasure to spend time with players and their families. Some player highlights: Who wouldn't enjoy it when Dimitri clips in a goal, or when Ricky, Virgil and Johnny energetically raise the tempo. The physical presence of players like John, Ali and Tobi is applied with such skill and also awareness for lesser mortals. Dennis, Patrick, Dustin and Herb are truly the gentlemen of the pitch, but Jose is in charge! Stevie with his deft touch is always a revelation. If Sizwe and Dennis G can get over Manchester United and Chelsea it will improve their already considerable skills. Norma, Rose and Veronica can play this game, and their children add a very special element to practices. Debbie adds so much to our group, and Jenny and Millie are stars. Darwin, the "other Ali" and Randy amaze me with their willingness to get between John and Ali and the goal. What a great family!

Players, coaches and volunteers attended a facilitated session at Station Street on January 20, 2015, to establish our priorities for the year. In 2015 progress was made on many of the issues, and we will continue in 2016.

The Whitecaps selected us as one of their major charities. Already we have seen the benefit of this relationship, with regular game tickets, a number of our players being employed, Whitecaps players and coaches attending practices, and a \$2,000 donation from sales of Whitecaps/Southsiders Cascadia scarves.

June Sports at Alert Bay was a huge success. Special thanks to Temple Shalom for cooking up a storm and providing meals for the event. Our woman's' team, with masterful performances from Dom, Sari, Norma and Rose-Marie took the final – great job! We are already planning and fund-raising for 2016.

Charles and Debbie led a highly successful trip to the PanAm games in Ontario. Two teams participated, with Debbie, Rose-Marie, Ricky, Richard Light, Dennis, Ali, Shamsi, Valerie, Giselle, Virgil, Stevie, Rose and Natasha representing VSSL.

Patrick set a personal best in the BMO Vancouver Marathon!



VSSL in the Media

The success of this year's Holiday Haul did not go unnoticed. Thanks to our new Communications Committee volunteer, Kimberley Bowie, who pitched our story, the Vancity Buzz and the CBC both covered the Holiday Haul and helped to promote the event.

You can read the Vancity Buzz article [here](#) and watch the video of the CBC interview, which features VSSL Vice President, Kurt Heinrich and player, Sizwe Dlamini [here](#) (at 23:30).

We welcome coverage of the VSSL because it promotes our league and it encourages the public to support us. And, of course, it's always fun to see our players and volunteers in the spotlight.



Celebrating the Holiday Haul



The best ever Holiday Haul Party, with Temple Shalom again leading the food preparation, and Dimitri on the turkey roasting.

We were able to build an impressive practice schedule, with indoor or outdoor experiences five days each week. Special events were a regular feature, including the Harry Manson day, games with Megaphone, Union Mission Gospel, Southsiders, LUSH, Twin Arrows, UBC Thunderbird Women, and Mayor Robertson, as well as the already mentioned June Sports and PanAm initiatives.

We have a growing number of instances where our players have made a difference. Rick, Patrick, Dennis and Jose continue to show leadership and mentoring for new and younger players and provide invaluable support for the coaches and volunteers at practices and events; Patrick, John, Johnny and Ricky have established practice sessions that have become key components in our program; Virgil, Norma and others were inspirational on the Alert Bay trip; Rose-Marie, Stevie, Dennis and Johnny have participated very professionally on the Board. There are many more examples of player excellence. Most importantly, our players constantly reinforce our goal of providing a safe soccer community for all.

We have a growing list of coaches and volunteers. The UBC Med students have taken their participation to a new level. Kurt's enthusiasm and constant attention to program has resulted in many of the excellent events that have raised our profile and gained valuable supporters and donors; Chantal moved us forward on the unenviable and critical (and large) task of coordinating our application for charitable status; Sarah W is enthusiastically leading our Corporate Sponsorship initiatives; Arun has rationalized and automated our financial management and reporting system; Dominique supervised our most impressive practice sessions and energetically led our Alert Bay initiative.

The VSSL was officially recognized for its efforts. We were presented with a City of Vancouver Award of Excellence (Diversity and Inclusion) by Mayor Gregor Robertson. The Covenant House soccer program was selected by the Whitecaps as its community organization for the MLS Community MVP competition.

Thanks to our sponsors: Avtiare, City of Vancouver, Fairware, LUSH, Portland Hotels, Soccerwest, Social Conscience, Southsiders, Temple Shalom, UBC Med students, UBC Thunderbirds Women, VanCity, and the Whitecaps.

Thanks to all players, coaches, volunteers and sponsors for your hard work on behalf of the VSSL. Best wishes for 2016.

Steve McMinn,
President,



Get Involved

We are always looking for new volunteers to help with coaching and other VSSL activities. If you want to get involved, [email us here](#).





Santa Dan Brings Donuts and Cheer to Sunday Practice

It has been a holiday tradition with the Vancouver Street Soccer League that Dan Coles (lower left phot, center) brings coffee and donuts to practice the weekend before Christmas. This year was no exception as "Santa Dan" pulled up with Covenant House van loaded with a variety of donuts, muffins, bagels, coffee, and hot chocolate. The donuts disappeared in a flash and the coffee and hot chocolate gave VSSL players an extra spark during the practice, allowing them to play a full field game.

Dan has been a dedicated board member with the VSSL and volunteer with Covenant House for a number of years. He provides coaching support and encouragement to players at Sunday practices and also works as an attorney for Owen Bird Law Corporation.

"I think it's a nice little tradition we have to enjoy a spread of hot drinks and snacks during our morning practice. It adds a little holiday cheer to the morning, and I think that all the players and coaches enjoy themselves standing around the van chatting with a warm cup in hand and it's a good way to support them," he says.

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