

## Mission Statement

**Dig 4 Kids is an after school program committed to provide youth in low-income communities with increased opportunities for academic and athletic achievement.**

### Digging Education

Through a series of volleyball clinics, Dig 4 Kids will provide financial and personnel support for volleyball programs at the elementary, middle school and high school levels. We reached out to over 5,000 kids during a three month period. Academics will serve as an integral compliment to the athletic program with tutors on hand to attend to the individual needs of students in the program. The goal of the Digging Education program is to provide youth in disadvantaged areas with an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of volleyball and to receive individual attention through tutoring so that we may promote interdependence between sports and education. Clinics will focus on the importance of teamwork and communication skills and encourage mentoring, volunteering and leadership. Dig 4 Kids will target select communities in need to offer the Digging Education program in two parts.

#### Part I: Elementary and Middle School kids

Part I of the Digging Education program focuses on collaborating with the local Boys and Girls Club (B&G Club) to recruit elementary and middle school kids (grades 5-8) that will benefit from participating in the weekly program. The program is conducted at either the local B&G Club or high school gym for three hours after school, once a week, for 8 weeks. The volleyball instruction is conducted by the best professional volleyball players in the country, along with high school athlete coaching assistants, and a certified trainer. Two hours are dedicated first to academic support and then to the volleyball portion for the final hour. The academic staff, comprised of qualified tutors and teachers, also provides guidance counseling.

#### Part II: High School Kids

Part II of the Digging Education program focuses on high school kids in grades 9-12, and provides coaching assistance and resource support to the girls and boy's high school volleyball teams. Dig 4 Kids utilizes its extensive network of volleyball professionals to hire an assistant coach who will attend daily practices and games and work closely with the head coach to enhance personal instruction for each team member. In addition, D4K provides game uniforms, new nets, and regulation volleyballs to each high school team in the Digging Education program. This support fills a great need, as many teams are currently struggling to come up with funds to purchase the most basic equipment. In addition, D4K trains volunteer athletes from the high school teams to serve as coaching assistants and mentors for the younger children in Part I of the Digging Education program hosted at the Boys and Girls Club. High school athletes assist with D4K during their off season so that no practices or games will be missed during their regular season. Finally, D4K will also host exhibitions that include a volleyball match with student players against professional players to encourage school enthusiasm and support for the less-traditional sport.

### **Part III: Kerri Walsh EVA Scholarship (Excellence in Volleyball & Academics)**

The Kerri Walsh EVA Scholarship is a competitive award for outstanding high school student athletes. Dig 4 Kids will award a scholarship to two male and two female high school senior athletes who will continue with their college education. Awards will be made on a yearly basis. Scholarships will be awarded to student athletes based on excellence in their sport, academic achievement, community service and overall character. Nominations for the scholarship will be requested from coaches during the academic year.

### **Dig For Kids Club Volleyball Team**

To fulfill our goal of encouraging skilled student athletes to dream big, D4K will organize and support the D4K Club Volleyball Team. This team will be comprised of kids that are interested in seriously pursuing volleyball and would benefit from year-round competition. As many coaches know, few college recruiters look towards lower-income schools because students have not had the resources to participate in intensive club team sports. D4K's team will represent a group of dedicated student athletes that are willing to work hard and aim for collegiate-level play. Soon enough, recruiters will be looking towards the inner-cities for their new talent.

### **Pilot Phase- Carson, CA**

The pilot program of "Digging Education" was a tremendous success and garnered the praise of parents, teachers, civic leaders and most importantly the 100 plus students who participated. D4K chose the multi-ethnic, resource-challenged community of Carson for the pilot phase due largely to the level of need in the community, as expressed during our recent focus group by Karen Blanke the girls volleyball coach at Carson High School. Blanke stated that, "My girls need \$50 to buy a practice T-shirt, game T-shirt, and shorts... and they're really struggling." The program provided the team with these essential needs and in turn each of the team members assisted the younger participants throughout the volleyball instruction portion of the program. The girls went on to win their first league championship in the school's history and credit the mentoring and support of Dig 4 Kids for this accomplishment. Dig 4 Kids was able to help the kids of Carson reach "up" to role models instead of reaching "out" to the various gangs and violent groups that currently exist in the area. Carson's population of approximately 90,000 is almost equally divided between the Hispanic, African-American, Pacific-Islander, and Caucasian ethnic groups.