



**PeacePassers & Comunidad Connect honor to
Coach Kevin Flanagan (North Meck Soccer Club)
Winter Season 2008**

The definition of a coach is “one who instructs or trains; especially one who instructs players in the fundamentals of a competitive sport and directs team strategy.” In the game of soccer a good coach teaches his players basic fundamentals, explains concepts, and enables players to think logically when making a play. With proper instruction the objective is to teach kids to work together as a team in order to achieve a common goal. While this is true, when I think of Coach Kevin Flanagan (aka Flano the Mano!), much more comes to mind.

Flanagan has a natural-born passion and love for the sport, which is obvious when he speaks about any aspect of the game. Whether it is technical talk or reminiscing about big-time plays in a match, the enthusiasm pours! On the field, an experienced coach like Kevin is clearly able to represent the qualities & responsibility that are necessary to effectively instruct a team. By teaching, mentoring, delegating, or most importantly role-modeling, a coach serves a position that impacts kids both on and off the pitch.

Teaching kids to respect other players and to work as a team helps in the development of social skills and sense of belonging, key to positive growth for youth. Coach Kevin understands the fine line between teaching complicated aspects of winning versus losing, while still maintaining the presence of competition. Learning success and failure is an important life skill that players learn along with their sport skills. Flanagan has the unique ability to instruct kids how to compete yet to be responsible for individual and team actions, which is more influential than he may realize!

In November, 2008 while in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua we joined together with Comunidad Connect by instructing a fútbol clinic for the kids of the local community. Working with the mission of PeacePassers we strive to collect and distribute soccer gear to areas with intention to provide kids more opportunities to play. Having coach Flanagan take a part in the 1st annual “La Vida Deportiva” clinic allowed us to understand more thoroughly, how significant coaching and simple instruction is for development of kids involved in playing sports. We found that although talented by nature, most of the youth had little to no knowledge in the concepts of teamwork, but rather are striving to be “the best” individual.

While inspired by the enthusiasm of the kids, we also had the wonderful opportunity of meeting several of the local coaches who genuinely want to implement a teamwork frame of mind into their young athletes. However, the coaches themselves often lack the training necessary to do so. With humbleness, they opened their minds to some of our basic training suggestions given during the sessions. The simple lesson on “juega con dos toques” (play with two touches) was amazing. If instruction can be given to the coaches it filters down to the ultimate goal, of inspiring young kids in their abilities as individuals, on a TEAM.

Thanks to a donation by Flanagan’s very own U-13 boys team at North Meck Soccer Club (NMSC), PeacePassers will be able to support future development & training of coaches in San Juan del Sur. Fostered through Comunidad Connects’ director Jon Thompson, and in honor of Coach Kevin Flanagan we appreciate the unique opportunity to make positive impact in this community, through the game of soccer. The charisma of Flanagan is one to model, and by his representation of the variety of aspects it takes to be a first-class coach, we hope to cultivate learning & skills in other coaches who share that same passion & love for the game.

Gracias a todos,
Candace J. Cooper & the PeacePassers Team