



Girls collect soccer donations for needy

By CAROL SPAETH-BAUER

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Submitted photo

Taylor Urchell (left) and Erin Manion, both of Delafield, collect gently used soccer gear to be distributed to underprivileged children through Peace Passers. Collection tents will be at Wales Park and Merton Soccer Park this weekend.

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After attending the Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy at the end of July, high school freshmen Erin Manion and Taylor Urchell of Delafield accepted the challenge of choosing to matter - one pair of cleats at a time.

While learning soccer skills from Foudy, the former USA women's soccer team captain, two-time Olympic gold medalist and two-time World Cup champion, the girls also worked on leadership skills and spent time in the community playing with children who had disabilities.

Seeing children who didn't have proper gear or clothing for playing soccer made the girls realize how privileged they are to not only play soccer on U15 club teams, but also to work with an Olympic athlete who made them feel special.

"We wanted to make other people feel like they were important," said Urchell.

Combining their love of soccer and the desire to make someone else's life better, the girls decided to put old uniforms "back into play," by collecting old, gently used uniforms, cleats, socks and balls for underprivileged youth through Peace Passers, an organization that has donated gear to 152 communities in 49

countries.

"It means a lot to those kids to get uniforms or (soccer) balls so they don't have to play with regular clothes or tennis balls," Manion explained.

In the first week of the collection, the duo collected three bins of soccer clothing, cleats and balls. As they continue their effort to "give other youth the experience of team play," the duo will accept donations at collection tents at Wales Park from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13, and 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 14, and at the Merton Soccer Park from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Oct. 13.

Additionally, collection bins with Peace Passers logos will be at concession stands in Wales and Ewald parks during concession hours through Oct. 21 where people can drop off donations. The Dousman Hair Depot, 114 N. Main St., will also have a collection bin through Oct. 27. New items will also be accepted, as well as monetary donations to help with shipping expenses. Extra proceeds will go directly to Peace Passers.

They've learned it is not too hard helping others feel better through a community project. They hope their efforts will spur others to "choose to matter."

"If we do a community project, more people will want to do them also," said Urchell.

Questions can be sent to

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Peace Passers collection

What: Gently used soccer uniforms, cleats, socks and balls

Where: Wales Park and Merton Soccer Park

When: 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13, (Wales) and 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13, (Merton) and 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 14, (Wales)

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