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Sport as a Tool for Social Change within Underserved Communities: A Description of the First Urban Soccer Collaborative National Youth Leadership Institute

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Abstract

This presentation will describe through lecture and video the first Urban Soccer Collaborative National Youth Leadership Institute, a weeklong residence program held at Xavier University to assist future leaders within underserved communities. This program could serve as a model for teaching sport leadership and service to children between the ages of 14-18. The weeklong program consisted of a youth soccer coaching education certification course, goal-setting sessions, personal and career development workshops, service through soccer training, and a cultural experience via a field trip to the Freedom Center on the Underground Railroad. Upon completion of the program the students made a commitment to design and implement a service-learning project within their underserved community within the calendar year. An update of their service projects will also be presented.

The youth coaching program worked in conjunction with the Ohio-South Youth Soccer Association and focused on how to coach elementary and middle school age youth in urban soccer youth development programs. Issues unique to urban soccer programs also included healthy life style components and how to insure adequate physical activity during the session. Goal-setting sessions included how to assess their academic, athletic and personal goals and use the assessments to develop individual action plans. Students also participated in mock service-learning projects that will act as the basis for service learning for their sponsoring programs. Finally, but the first program of the week, was a cultural educational experience at the Freedom Center, an educational center dedicated to telling the history and lessons learned from slavery and the existence of the Underground Railroad. The center tells these lessons through three themes of courage, cooperation, and perseverance. These themes were then adopted as the themes of the week and were integrated to every session, such as how one would use courage in coaching.

