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McLean Youth Soccer Celebrates Opening of Two State-Of-The-Art, All-Weather Turf Fields at Spring Hill Park.

Close working relationship with local neighbors, the U.S. Soccer Foundation, and Fairfax County Park Authority key to success

McLean, VA - September 19, 2008 - McLean Youth Soccer, in conjunction with the Fairfax County Park Authority, announces the completion of two state-of-the-art, all-weather FieldTurf fields at Spring Hill Park in McLean, Virginia. MYS and the FCPA will co-host the opening ceremony on Saturday, September 27th at 9:00 am. MYS will be joined by Gerry Connolly, chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Dranesville Supervisor John Foust, Park Authority Director John Dargle, Kevin Fay, Dranesville District Representative, Fairfax County Park Authority Board and other officials as well as players from the Washington Freedom and DC United. Food, prizes, games and other fun activities will be available to all that attend.

The MYS and FCPA public-private partnership provides a blueprint for providing synthetic fields for youth field sports at a time when Fairfax County and other local municipalities are finding it difficult to meet the demand for field space.

"On behalf of the county and myself, I want to thank MYS for funding these important field improvements. I also want to thank MYS, the Park Authority and the community for working together to make this project happen, said John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor

The two new fields, Spring Hill Park Fields #2 and #3, cost approximately \$1.8 million to construct. MYS provided all of the funding for the project through a combination of player fees, grants, donations, sponsorships and bank loans. MYS received \$10,000 through the FCPA Mastenbrook Grant, and the U.S. Soccer Foundation awarded MYS one of its prestigious Synthetic Field Building Program Grants contributing \$100,000 to the project. The funds from MYS were then conveyed to the FCPA, who retains ownership of the fields, in the form of a donation in return for priority scheduling rights. The construction of the turf fields was managed by the FCPA.

"We are inspired by McLean Youth Soccer and the FCPA's commitment to building safe places for children to play and enjoy the Beautiful Game," said Ed Foster-Simeon, President of the U.S. Soccer Foundation. "As the Major Charitable Arm of Soccer in the U.S. we see first hand the growing demand for field space in the U.S. and recognize the need for strong community partnerships and support for projects like this to succeed."

Before funding the two fields at Spring Hill Park, MYS leadership also spent significant time with local homeowner associations to understand their concerns and to ensure that they were part of the process. MYS learned that there were many shared interests and common concerns.



“Both groups represent the same people. Our players’ families are members of their associations. We all want quality athletic opportunities for their children, are concerned about the environmental impact of urbanization, are worried about the impact of growth in Tysons Corner on our community, and wish to preserve natural spaces. All-weather fields are a logical solution that addresses many of these issues,” noted Lance Hackett, Director of Field Development for MYS, “They allow better utilization of existing athletic fields, while maintaining a quality surface.”

Fairfax County has agreed to work with MYS in the near future to identify additional synthetic field development opportunities. MYS hopes that the completion of these first two fields will encourage other sports organizations in McLean and across the county that use rectangular fields to join forces for the development of future fields.

“If we sit back and wait for the County to improve all our fields, our children will never see the benefits. There are over 700 rectangular fields in Fairfax County, and less than 20 fields have been converted to turf with public funds. In the current economic conditions, there is not enough public funding to satisfy the demand for turf fields. We hope that other sports organizations and the local high schools will decide to join us in future turf projects,” added Mr. Hackett.

The fields employ the latest technology from FieldTurf (www.fieldturf.com) to ensure that player safety and environmental responsibility are a top priority. These new fields are softer and far less abrasive than the early types of turf fields many associate with AstroTurf, the first all-weather field. Studies have shown that the rate of injury is lower on turf fields. And those studies are in comparison to quality grass surfaces, not to the rutted and pitted dirt fields common throughout the county and across the nation. These new synthetic surfaces feel very much like grass, and the annual cost of maintenance is substantially lower than the cost to maintain a grass field. Moreover, there is no need for fertilizers and other chemical treatments to maintain the fields, and the stone base beneath the fields filter the pollutants in rain water, reducing their run-off into the Chesapeake Bay.

“We are very excited about the new fields at Spring Hill Park,” said Michael Riemer, Chairman, McLean Youth Soccer. “We have shown that working together with the neighbors and the county does work, and in the end, it is the kids that receive the benefit of all the hard work. We believe that when people see these new fields, it will energize sports organizations across the county to work together on future initiatives. We would love to see families from the other McLean sports organizations and the general public to join us at the ceremony.”

About McLean Youth Soccer Association (MYS)

McLean Youth Soccer Association is a registered tax-exempt 501(c) (3) organization based in McLean, Virginia, in the heart of Fairfax County, less than 30 minutes from our Nation's capital. MYS provides a broad range of soccer opportunities for children ranging in age from 4 to 18. Our mission is to provide a place for every player and a developmentally appropriate experience, promoting the emotional and physical well-being of each athlete through the game of soccer. MYS offers a variety of training programs, camps and league participation including TOPSoccer, Recreation, Travel, MPS and more. MYS is now one of the largest individual sports organizations in Fairfax County with more than 4200 members on more than 260 teams using more than 22 fields. For more information go to www.mcleansoccer.org.

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