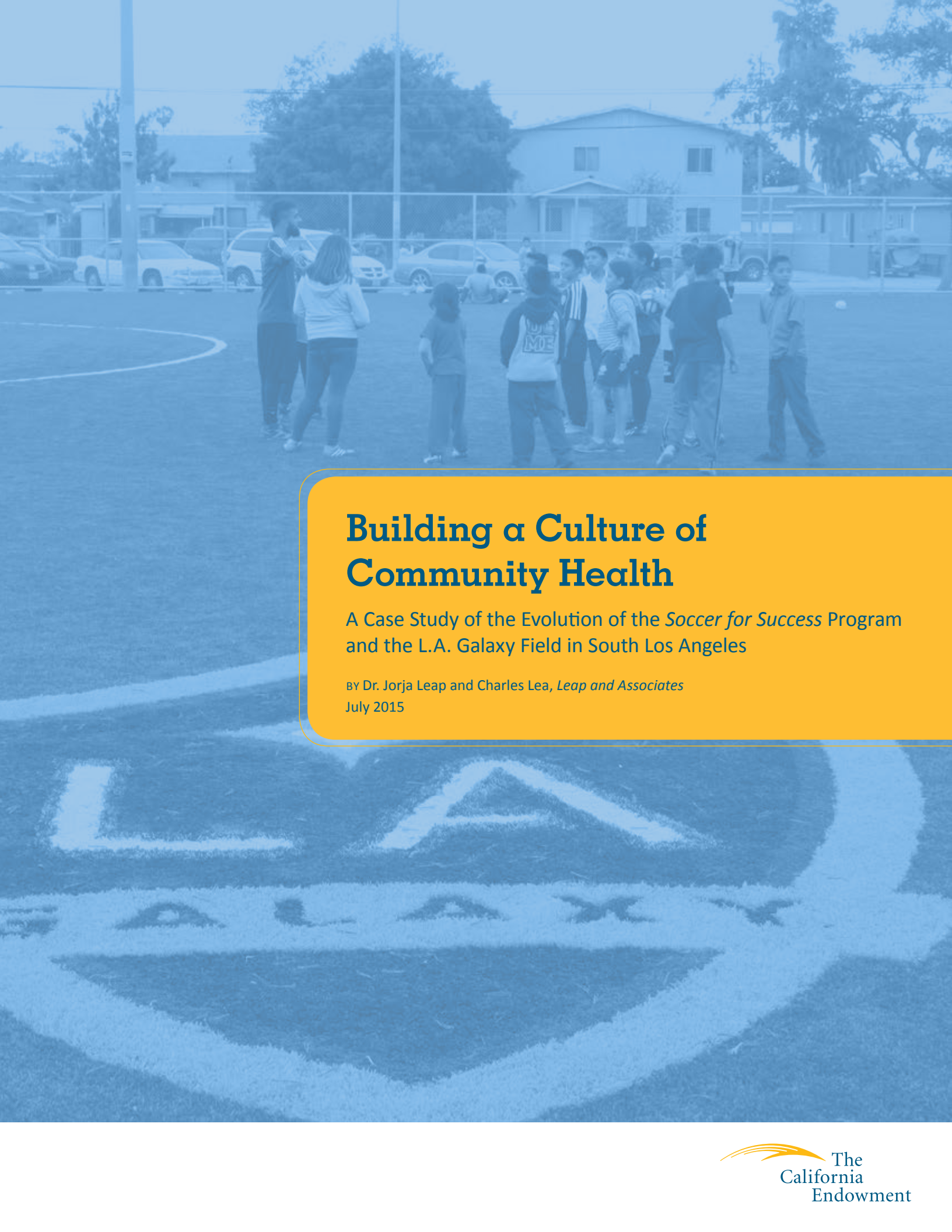




Building a Culture of Community Health

A Case Study of the Evolution of the *Soccer for Success* Program
and the L.A. Galaxy Field in South Los Angeles

BY Dr. Jorja Leap and Charles Lea, *Leap and Associates*
July 2015

About this series

Where we live, our race, and our income each play a big part in how well and how long we live. Parents want to raise their children in neighborhoods with safe parks and quality schools, but many Californians don't get to choose where they live. Because the differences between neighborhoods is linked to differences in health outcomes, The California Endowment's **Building Healthy Communities** initiative includes a deep investment in place.

The 14 communities that are a part of Building Healthy Communities have long histories dealing with policies that have institutionalized class, race and ethnic disparities in education, health and human services, and local government planning decisions. They represent California's incredible diversity across race, geographic location, and political orientation. They are California's future.

Building Healthy Communities has a simple strategy: work on a local scale to create broad, statewide impact. We need to reshape the places that shape us—our neighborhoods.

In this case study series, we explore successes, opportunities, challenges and lessons experienced by communities endeavoring to create and sustain healthy communities for children and families.



Acknowledgments

Our gratitude goes to Brotherhood Crusade and the many leaders that supported the development of the Soccer for Success Program and the L.A. Galaxy Field for their valuable insights on the critical importance of partnership and working across organizations to offer comprehensive youth development programs. We wish to thank Dr. Jorja Leap and Charles Lea, lead authors, of Leap & Associates for their work on this case study.

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Introduction

On October 1, 2014, the Los Angeles Galaxy Field opened at the Algin Sutton Recreation Center in South Los Angeles, California. The establishment of this soccer field and athletic facility actively engaged residents, community organizers, advocates, the private sector and local officials in a program dedicated to transforming South Los Angeles into a healthier, safer community of color. This community-driven effort offers an important example of how resident engagement coupled with focused partnerships can foster the building of a healthy community.

Background

To examine this community-driven endeavor and to offer lessons for similar initiatives, TCE collaborated with Leap and Associates (LA), a long-time research partner, to evaluate the development, implementation, and operation of the Scholastic Sports Experience Soccer for Success (SFS) program and the Los Angeles Galaxy Field in South Los Angeles. A rigorous case study methodology approach guided the research process, which was participatory, intentional, and focused on five research themes, including:

- 1 How the soccer program and field was created to respond to youth interest and community needs
- 2 Ways in which the soccer program and field advances the overall well-being of youth and families
- 3 Activities youth, families and community members have engaged in to support and enlarge the operation of the soccer program and field
- 4 Perceptions and beliefs on the part of the community regarding the importance of the soccer field in community wellness
- 5 The role of community, philanthropic and corporate partnerships in developing, implementing, and sustaining the soccer program and field

Along with ongoing ethnographic observation, 25 individuals were interviewed for this case study. Participants included representatives of Brother Crusade, family members and parents, local officials, and partners from the community, corporate, education, and philanthropic sectors. Interviews were intended to capture in-depth accounts of participants' thoughts about the significance of the SFS program and athletic field as well as serve as an account of their experiences during the varied phases of the project.

Place Matters:

TCE Building Healthy Communities Initiative and South Los Angeles

In 2010, The California Endowment (TCE) launched the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Initiative, a 10-year, and \$1 billion commitment to improving the health status of California residents. To achieve these goals, TCE partners with and invests in community-based organizations in 14 communities throughout California, collaborating with local stakeholders and agencies to “create places where children and youth are healthy, safe and ready to learn.” The practice of investing in communities and working across systems aligns with TCE’s *Drivers of Change* model, emphasizing the following five elements: 1) developing youth leaders; 2) building resident power; 3) collaboration; 4) leveraging partnerships; and 5) changing the narrative.



Building Healthy Communities

Drivers of Change

People
Power

Youth
Leadership,
Development
and Organizing

Enhanced
Collaboration
& Policy
Innovation

Leveraging
Partnerships
& Resources

Changing
the
Narrative

Although the *Drivers of Change* framework is designed to facilitate local community efforts aimed at improving the overall health and wellness of their neighborhoods and residents, each BHC hub is responsible for developing a vision and plan for what issues will be prioritized that respond to needs and cultures of their communities. Decision-making is shared, and all the parties with a stake in BHC constructively develop a joint strategy for action. The [South Los Angeles Building Healthy Communities \(SLABHC\)](#) site has a long tradition of community advocacy and systems change that has grown through its engagement with TCE.



Brotherhood Crusade and Soccer for Success

Among the SLABHC partners, *Brotherhood Crusade*, a nonprofit grassroots organization, has played a major role in the hub's community and systems change efforts. As part of their holistic approach to youth development, Brotherhood Crusade operates several community-based programs, including the Jim Clemons Books and Basketball Camp and the Nutritional Education and Obesity Prevention (NEOP) Program. The camp includes instruction in math and science, financial literacy, social and personal development, health and nutrition, and basketball. The NEOP Program is a statewide movement of local, state and national partners collectively working toward improving the health status of low-income Californians through increased fruit and vegetable consumption and daily physical activity.

Brotherhood Crusade's experience and success in providing athletic programming focused on youth development and their connection to the BHC Initiative quite organically led to their collaboration with the U.S. Soccer Foundation (USSF)¹. They emerged as the ideal partner to both envision and implement the Soccer for Success (SFS) Program*.

"We were an enthusiastic partner with USSF because we saw the program as an ideal opportunity to provide safe spaces for children and youth to play and learn, for parents to play and engage with their children, to address obesity within the community, and to teach youth about team building in a non-competitive way."

— Charisse Bremond-Weaver,
Brotherhood Crusade



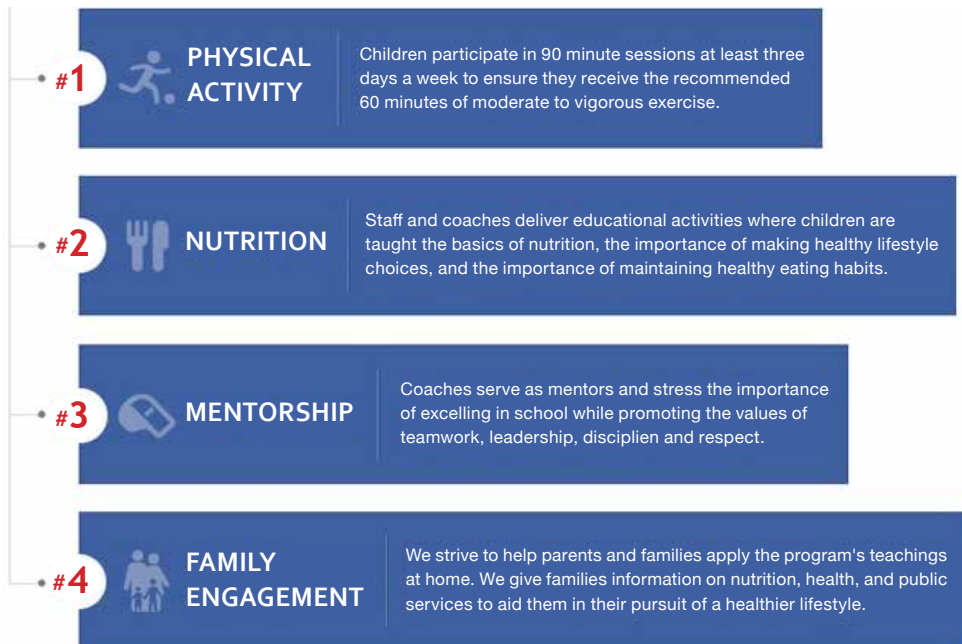
¹Established in 1994, the U.S. Soccer Foundation (USSF) is recognized as the leading charitable soccer foundation in the US; its mission is "to enhance, assist and grow the sport of soccer in the United States.

*The SFS program is a no-cost, evidence-based after-school sports and youth development program that aims to "improve children and youths' physical health, self-esteem and behaviors, and to increase their knowledge about healthy lifestyles." Specifically, the SFS program targets youth between the ages of five and 18 residing in underserved communities in the United States.

During the initial 2010–2011 program year, Brotherhood Crusade piloted the SFS program throughout South Los Angeles as the Scholastic Sports Experience Soccer for Success Program. Following the pilot year, Brotherhood Crusade expanded the SFS program to several school and community sites throughout South Los Angeles. By 2014, the program was operating at 16 South Los Angeles sites.²

However, as the SFS program was expanding, the need to increase safe parks and green space throughout the community became more pronounced. Given USSF's awareness of this need, Ed Foster-Simeon, President and CEO of the USSF, approached Brotherhood Crusade, with \$200,000 in funds to build a soccer field. However, these funds needed to be used by the end of 2014. This set the stage for the development of the Los Angeles Galaxy Field.

The Components of Soccer for Success



²These 16 area schools and community sites include: 52nd Street Elementary School, 59th Street Elementary School, Algin Sutton Park, Angeles Mesa School, Athens Park, Audubon School, Budlong Elementary School, Danny Blackwell Primary School, Horace Mann Junior High, John Muir Middle School, Lou Danzler School, Manchester School, Markham School, Menlo Elementary School, Mount Carmel Park, and Obama School.

Developing the Los Angeles Galaxy Field

The process of developing this athletic field into a community base of activities involved three distinct yet interrelated phases: 1) Visioning; 2) Planning; and 3) Implementation and Operation.

Phase 1: Visioning

Over a two-month period, Mr. Foster-Simeon visited South Los Angeles, working closely with Brotherhood Crusade to “scan the neighborhood for potential playing fields,” ultimately settling on a dirt field at the Algin Sutton Recreation Center, owned and operated by the City of Los Angeles in the 8th Council District. With its long history of service provision, Brotherhood Crusade already possessed a relationship with 8th District Councilmember Bernard C. Parks who was happy to support their efforts. Subsequently, Brotherhood Crusade worked with the Los Angeles City Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) Planning, Construction, and Maintenance Branch to design and determine the cost of replacing the existing dirt field with an 80,000 square foot artificial turf field, with all field improvements valued at \$675,000.

While the USSF was able to provide an initial financial gift of \$200,000 to help revitalize the unfinished park, Brotherhood Crusade was responsible for securing \$500,000 in matching funds to meet the project budget. Shared goals with potential philanthropic partners, lengthy collaborative histories with existing corporate partners, and documented program success were all factors that helped Brotherhood Crusade secure the matching funds needed for this project. Table below provides an overview of the philanthropic partners who supported the soccer field project, including their investment amount and funding areas.

L.A. Galaxy Field Philanthropic and Corporate Partners

Partner	Investment Amount	Funding Areas
Cal South Soccer Foundation	\$50,000	• Education • Environment (particularly innovative, scaleable, & transformative projects) • Health
Leon Lowenstein Foundation	\$50,000	• Equipment • Program Matching • Field Development
Los Angeles Galaxy Foundation	\$200,000	• Education • Health • Los Angeles
The California Endowment	\$200,000	• General Operating Support • Project and Program Support • Direct Charitable Activities

Developing the Los Angeles Galaxy Field

Phase 2: Planning

Once matching funds were secured, Brotherhood Crusade worked closely with their philanthropic, corporate, direct-serve partners and local officials to develop a plan for soccer and recreational programming to take place at the revitalized field. Framed as a “community development project,” this collaborative group outlined SFS programming at the Algin Sutton Recreation Center that operated three days per week, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., for 24 weeks during the school year. The plan also featured weekly family engagement programming, including a parent boot camp and a weekly farmer’s market. The plan also proposed that St. John’s Well and Child Center, a nonprofit community health center, provide preventive and primary health care services to community residents through weekly mobile health clinic visits at Algin Sutton, incorporating a Universal Health Consent Form³ as part of the SFS enrollment process. Brotherhood Crusade leveraged their partnership with another existing community-based partner, the Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic, and proposed offering trauma-informed mental health services to SFS participants through the Clinic’s Access and Wellness Center; a cost-free and appointment-free walk-in clinic open between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. five days a week.

Alongside these efforts, Brotherhood Crusade was instrumental in developing a Gift Agreement Proposal to the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks to ensure SFS programming and related activities could operate at the revitalized field year-round. This proposal allowed the USSF to donate the soccer field to the City. Thus—in authentic collaboration—with support from their philanthropic, corporate, and nonprofit partners and local officials including Councilmember Bernard Parks, Brotherhood Crusade’s Gift Agreement Proposal was approved on June 11, 2014.



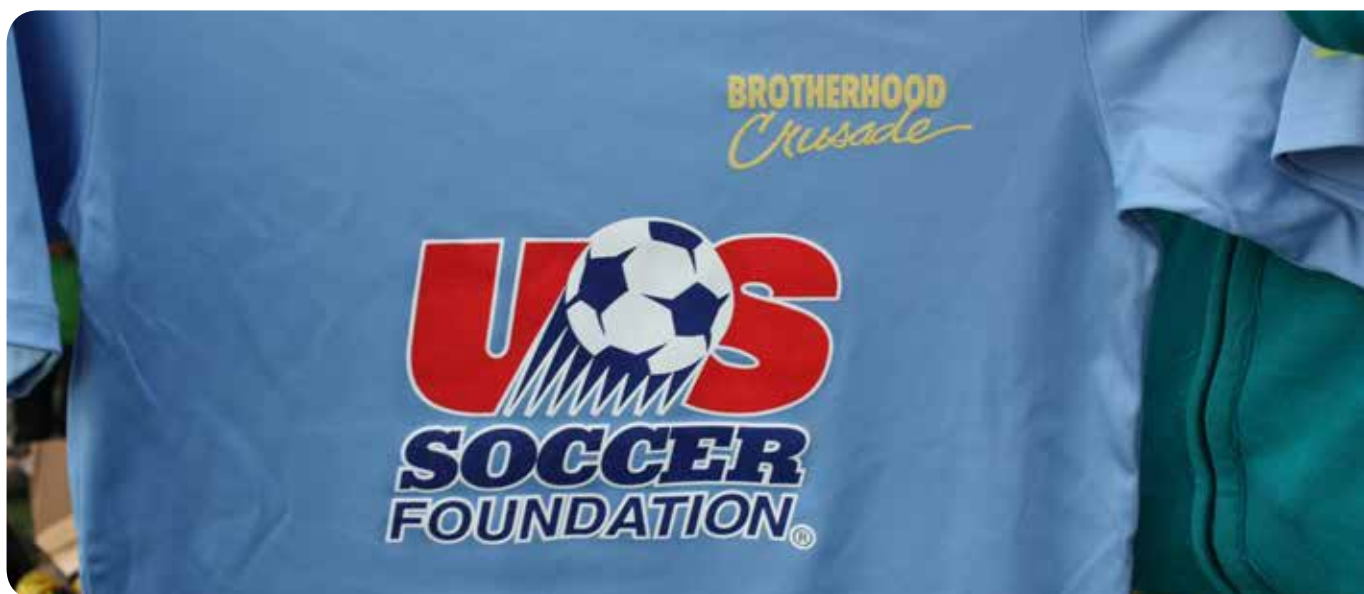
³The “Universal Health Consent Form” consent form replaced the existing consent and waiver forms developed and used by a “coalition of partners” serving LAUSD students. It gives students and their families access to free health care services available at the school-based health clinics.

Developing the Los Angeles Galaxy Field

Phase 3: Implementation and Operation

The transformation of the dirt field at the Algin Sutton Recreation Center began late in the summer of 2014. The City of Los Angeles Department of RAP Planning, Construction and Maintenance Branch, in collaboration with Brotherhood Crusade, were responsible for overseeing and coordinating the construction of the proposed field. The process involved in completing the field design plans along with the ancillary improvements encompassed several key activities, including:

- Demolition and excavation of the exiting field
- Relocation of existing utilities
- Installation of sub-base and drainage system
- Concrete work surrounding the field
- Installation of perimeter irrigation and landscaping
- Installation of the synthetic turf material
- Installation of goals, netting and recognition signage
- Sealing and stripping the existing parking lot in accordance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, including van access and signage
- Secure a five-year maintenance package that includes grooming twice per year
- Installation of metal bleachers and construction of related concrete slab
- Installation of 8-foot high chain link fence with a 4-foot wide man gate and 12-foot wide double swing gate
- Demolition of an existing walkway and construction of concrete ADA ramp and adjoining sidewalk



Developing the Los Angeles Galaxy Field

Phase 3: Implementation and Operation *(continued)*

All of this work culminated in the Los Angeles Galaxy Field opening in October 2014 with a ceremony attended by children, youth, parents, community residents, nonprofit, philanthropic and corporate partners, as well as the Los Angeles Galaxy president, coaches, team members, Squad Team, and mascot, Cozmo. The event concluded with a soccer clinic facilitated by the Los Angeles Galaxy team.

Immediately after, Brotherhood Crusade began offering the Scholastic Sports Experience SFS program at the new field. Because the new field is large enough to engage youth from the local community and two local school sites, two SFS sessions are offered every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday during the 12-week program period. Additionally, the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks also provides recreational youth programming—including leagues and tournaments—at the new soccer field, which were incorporated into the City’s Summer Night Lights (SNL) Soccer Program. Youth sports and recreation programming operates at the field on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday mornings from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Recreation and Parks are also committed to offer programming at the field from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and all day Sunday. Also, as one of six Los Angeles sites for a Community Soccer Series, the Los Angeles Galaxy Foundation’s Galaxy team holds soccer practice as well as youth programming at the Algin Sutton Recreation Center. Coordinated scheduling ensures that programs are complementary and maximize the use of the field.

As a result of this collaborative, community-driven effort, children, youth and families engagement in physical fitness activities, as well as access to safe playing fields, has increased. The development and operation of the SFS program and the Los Angeles Galaxy Field is transforming the ways in which the South Los Angeles community and local stakeholders think about and approach health and wellness.



Case Study Findings:

Facilitating a Culture of Community Health

The case study research was designed to document the positive health and wellness outcomes that have resulted from this endeavor. In an analysis of documents, observations and interviews, six related themes emerged. All six themes illustrate the ways in which this community-driven effort effectively builds on the Building Healthy Communities 5 Drivers of Change model. These themes are also aligned with at least one of the four major outcomes that guided the design and implementation of the soccer field and programming, as well as the research process.

OUTCOME: A Safe Place for Children and Youth to Play and Learn



Theme 1: Expanded Out-of-School Time (OST) Programming

During the process of implementing the SFS program, and revitalizing the unfinished athletic field at Algin Sutton, Brotherhood Crusade, in collaboration with their school, community, corporate and philanthropic partners, extended afterschool programming at several LAUSD schools between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Working with several SLABHC hub partners they also expanded out-of-school time programming during the summer months by launching the Health Happens Here Summer School in the summer of 2012 at John Muir Middle School. The program served about 150 South Los Angeles children and youth (ages 5-18) in morning hours. Youth received academic instruction, were engaged in a variety of enrichment classes, and provided a free hot lunch. The school campus was also open to the community from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

As a result, children and youth, including their parents, now have access to additional recreational, fitness, and sport-based youth development programs in safe spaces throughout the community. In building on elements of [Collaboration](#) and [Leveraging Partnerships](#), Brotherhood Crusade helped to secure 18 land-use agreements between LAUSD and the City of Los Angeles that allowed them to operate SFS and other health-focused programs during out of school hours.

Case Study Findings

OUTCOME: A Safe Place for Children and Youth to Play and Learn *(continued)*

Theme 2: Developed Youth Employment Opportunities

By leveraging their internal resources, Brotherhood Crusade increased youth employment opportunities through the Youth Source Center they operate in South Los Angeles, an effort aligned with the [Youth Leadership Development](#) driver of change. The Youth Source Center, a Workforce Investment Act funded effort, provides subsidized employment to youth participating in the Jr. Executive Work Readiness Training Program. As the SFS program was being expanded, Brotherhood Crusade viewed this as an employment resource with nine Jr. Executive Work Readiness Training Program participants being hired as SFS mentor coaches.

Theme 3: Increased Access to Primary and Preventive Healthcare and Health Homes

Brotherhood Crusade and their coalition partners developed and implemented a Universal Health Consent Form at two LAUSD school-based health clinics operated by St. John's Well Child and Family Center. As a result, as part of the SFS enrollment process, students and their families are given applications and encouraged to make one of the LAUSD school-based health clinics their new health home. In early 2016, SLABHC Hub partners will pilot the project at two additional high schools in an ongoing effort to expand its impact. [Collaboration](#) and [Leveraging Partnerships](#) proved to be significant drivers of change integral to the process of increasing connections to school-based health clinics. Brotherhood Crusade also built on the change elements of Leveraging Partnerships and People Power through their MOU with the Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic, developing SFS into a trauma informed, sports-based youth development program connecting youth to the Clinic's Access and Wellness Center that provides daily no-fee, walk in mental health screenings, crisis intervention and linkages to community resources.

Case Study Findings

OUTCOME: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

Theme 4: Provided Innovative School-Time, Physical and Nutrition Education Models

Brotherhood Crusade again utilized internal resources to positively influence behavioral and environmental changes throughout South Los Angeles schools. Specifically, in alignment with the goals of the Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention (NEOP) program, they have banned junk food at the SFS school and community sites, offering fruit-infused water at parent meetings and providing cookbooks” and other nutrition-related resources as well as organizing weekly farmer’s markets. Youth Advocates facilitate nutrition education workshops and campaigns community-wide to enhance healthy community, policy and system changes.

I found out about this program through a flier I received at my kids’ school. They wanted to come, and I wanted them to be more active so I enrolled them...We started the program a few months ago and I’ve already noticed that my kids are more social, confident, they have more friends, and they are losing weight.

—Latino mother with two children participating

OUTCOME: Community Building and Conflict Prevention

Theme 5: Promoted Family Engagement and Community Events

In an effort to increase family engagement, Brotherhood Crusade sponsors a range of community events, such as the Navidad En El Barrio holiday event, a toy and clothing giveaway, and St. John’s Well Child and Family Center’s mobile health clinic. Family and community-building efforts are scheduled in collaboration with SFS programming to encourage parents and community residents to engage in activities. These efforts include: 1) Kids Walk Across America; 2) Parent Boot Camps; 3) “The Lights” at the Algin Sutton Recreation Center, all of which help to extend afterschool programming beyond 6 p.m.; and 4) a weekly farmer’s market.

OUTCOME: Philanthropic and Corporate Partnerships

Theme 6: Leveraged In-Kind Donations and Supports

Brotherhood Crusade has secured financial resources along with in-kind donations and supports to ensure the SFS program and the soccer field activities are sustained. For example, the Los Angeles Galaxy team provides training to their SFS coaches; AEG hosts job shadows for youth participating in their various programs, and Ralphs provides a foundation grant that supports their health and youth-focused program-related expenses. In addition, Ralphs also provides in-kind products and supplies, such as water and granola bars, and works to help support the SFS program and other Brotherhood Crusade community activities, such as health fairs.

Conclusion

The development, implementation, and operation of the Scholastic Sports Experience Soccer For Success program and the Los Angeles Galaxy Field offers a meaningful case study of both the foundation and growth of community health and engagement. Ultimately strategies and practices discussed in this case study were woven together to build a healthier community in South Los Angeles. These included:

- **Implementing a holistic youth development model.**

The Weaver Continuum Model of Development that structures Brotherhood Crusade's youth programs and activities—including SFS—proved to be a key factor in the positive changes that arose from the soccer program and its new field. The impact of this holistic model became evident during the research process, when parents reported that their children were “more social,” and even regularly repeated the important lessons they learned through SFS and the Brotherhood Crusade program.

- **Leveraging internal organizational programs.**

By connecting internal resources such as the Junior Executive Work Readiness Training and Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention programs, Brotherhood Crusade has been able to:

- 1) enhance the advocacy and employment knowledge, skills, and opportunities of their youth leaders and participants;
- 2) increase their knowledge, skills, opportunities, and outcomes surrounded health and wellness; and
- 3) empower community residents to take charge of their own health.

Most significantly, in offering programming that is holistic, Brotherhood Crusade was able to use soccer as a vehicle to positively change the health habits of community residents.

- **Developing focused partnerships.**

Forging effective partnerships with a variety of public, philanthropic, corporate, and system and community-based stakeholders proved to be critical to developing and implementing programming throughout South Los Angeles that supports community health and system changes. Specifically, in being intentional about connecting SFS and the Los Angeles Galaxy Field to other health-focused efforts occurring throughout the community, Brotherhood Crusade and SLABHC have been able to increase community residents' access to critical health services and supports.

*Look at how we
are all working
out together—
it's truly the
children, their
parents and the
whole community
getting it together.*

—African American father

Conclusion *(continued)*

- **Embodying a culture of community pride and togetherness.**

The vital culture of community that exists in South Los Angeles must be recognized as fundamental in the success of this effort. As Tamu Jones, TCE Program Manager, explained, “I don’t think its an accident that this type of magic happened given the leadership of Brotherhood Crusade and others who have the ability to bring people together in a way that is effective...it’s important to support community gems that create change and transform the narrative of South LA.” South Los Angeles represents a community that manifests strengths and commitments—as this case study demonstrates in vivid detail.

Ultimately—and most significantly—the story of the Los Angeles Galaxy Field embodies a dramatic example of Changing the Narrative. The activities and outcomes associated with the soccer field and its programs are a testimony to individual wellness and community health. Children, youth, families, and residents throughout the community are engaging in more physical activities, increasing their knowledge concerning nutrition, and improving their behavioral habits. Additionally, enhanced partnerships and collaborations focused on health and wellness in South Los Angeles are helping engaged programs and agencies to leverage their organizational resources. This is the living example of building a healthy community.

Closing

The experiences and lessons of case studies illuminate both promising practices and challenges communities experience as they work to create systemic change and sustain healthy communities for children and families. Although each BHC community is unique and the experiences and lessons learned are specific to the South Los Angeles region, there are themes dealing with leadership, collective action, and leverage that can be applied to community change initiatives in other places. Future case studies will continue to chronicle the stories of the 14 BHC communities throughout California as they focus on prevention and changing community norms for better health outcomes.