

Here's a new nonprofit group bringing soccer to kids in Redlands



Members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside gather for a pep talk by a coach at a soccer clinic put on by UK International Soccer Foundation at the Burrage Mansion in Redlands. (Courtesy Photo)

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Boys & Girls Club members recently participated in a soccer clinic on the grounds of the Burrage Mansion in Redlands.

The June 27 clinic was a pilot program of Redlands-based UK international Soccer's new nonprofit venture, the UK International Soccer Foundation.

"It was truly an honor to spend the afternoon playing soccer with the kids and we look forward to working with them again in the near future," said Kate DeSantis, executive director of the UK International Soccer Foundation, in a press release from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside.

The foundation's mission is "to reach and inspire youth from disadvantaged backgrounds through the 'best possible soccer experience,' " according to the press release.

UK International Soccer, which opened its first office in Redlands more than 20 years ago, provides community day camps, residential camps, seasonal training programs, training academies, team coaching, player and coach clinics, school programs and coach education products. Coaches come from the United Kingdom, Europe and South America.

UK International Soccer, which has worked with more than 475,000 youth over the years, “saw the positive impact their programs had on youth across the U.S., but knew their impact could reach further,” according to its new foundation.

At the Burrage Mansion, coaches split Boys & Girls Club members ages 6 to 12 into rotations for a scrimmage and drills and skills. The coaches were graduate students from the United States and the United Kingdom.

“We’re grateful for UK International Soccer’s decision to support our kids as they start their foundation,” said Mark Davis, senior vice president of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside, in the press release. “They help us promote healthy lifestyles for all our kids, and make it possible for us to offer high-quality sports programs.”

The foundation is running pilot programs in various cities this summer, and will launch later this year.