

CHITTENDEN COUNTY SOCCER SCHOOL

Betty Moore

The Chittenden County Soccer School was started in Underhill in 1980. It was the inspiration of Grant Allendorf, who conceived of a summer program for young children to teach them the fundamentals of soccer while having a good time in the process. Grant had highly enjoyed playing soccer at Mount Mansfield Union High School and then at Norwich University, and he realized the importance of an early introduction to the game. With the help of his former MMU teammates, Peter Alexander and Andrew Volgemann, the program took root as a summer camp for one week in the month of July. The program was held some summers at the Browns River Middle School, some years at MMU. (and fortunately, the weather over the many years mysteriously cooperated.).

The program serves boys and girls ages 5-15 and includes coaching for several levels of skills, beginner to expert. . The first year the day camp had 18 students. The next year it doubled to 36 and the third year had 90 players. By the mid '80s the camp was continuing to grow and served the entire Champlain Valley. In the early '90s the camp reached a peak enrollment of over 340. Thereafter, the enrollment somewhat declined as football programs and other activities became available for the younger set. In the past decade the attendance has ranged between 150- 175.

In 2012, after 31 years of involvement, Allendorf handed over the management of the camp to popular area coach, Eric Barker, who still runs the program. Some of the coaches besides Eric who have volunteered their time over the years include :

Dick Farrell, Jack Pennypacker, Dave Williamson, Danielle Morin, Anton Kelsey, Duane Dakin, Corey Hevrin, Peter Alexander, Jeff Davis, Paul Pecor, They represent a high level of community involvement. Special coach, Bucky Brandt, served the camp for over 25 years. The camp was also staffed by volunteers who helped with various activities. Susan Allendorf, Patti Jacobs, and Penny Moore helped with registration of the campers on the first day of the program. It is estimated that 7500 area children have attended the Chittenden County Soccer School over the years. As of 2013, the summer camp is thriving and highly anticipated by children and parents.

Source: Grant Allendorf