



San Tan United Sports Academy  
270 E. Hunt Highway  
Suite 16 #173  
San Tan Valley, AZ 85143

October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**To: Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu**

On behalf of San Tan United Sports Academy (STUSA) we would like to thank you and the Pinal County Sheriff's Office for your generous donation. The Money donated from the R.I.C.O. Funds (Criminal seized money) help our organization tremendously as well as the families that participate in San Tan United Sports Academy events.

STUSA provides affordable soccer and flag football sports leagues for children ages 3 years old thru 17 years old. We are staffed by volunteers who donate their time. All our services are supported by fees paid by families. STUSA fees are at half price in comparison to other sports organizations in this area. Our recreational league costs only \$49 per athlete. On top of low fees we still offer additional discounts for our hard working volunteers.

The fact that we run an efficient and organized sports program, along with our fees being so low, this attracts many families from San Tan Valley and outside neighboring areas such as Casa Grande, Florence, Anthem, Coolidge and Queen Creek. We always hoped that if we keep fees low, more parents could afford to register their kids. The more kids participating in playing sports, the less trouble they can get into and the more exercise they can get to help fight the obesity problem in America. We all know and have seen children of low income families going down the wrong path in life. It costs money to play sports or to participate in other extracurricular activities. However, it is free to hang out with the wrong crowd such as gangs and get in trouble. We have seen children who grew up never experiencing team solidarity and healthy competition turn to drugs or gang activities.

STUSA started because when we moved to San Tan Valley, we saw that there are a lot of kids and not a lot of activities for them to participate in. When we began coaching in other

sports leagues out in the area, they charged \$90 per athlete. Other sports leagues at the time did not offer any volunteer/coach's discounts or even a t-shirt. During practice we would see kids hanging out in the local park while our team was practicing. We would go talk with them and invited them to play. Many times they were eager to participate and practice with the team. However, when we would ask why they do not join the league, their response was usually, "We can't afford it." We decided to get other parents together that were currently on an adult soccer team and we began STUSA. Our goal was to make a strong league that is organized and runs efficient while providing top service and sports experience for the kids at a low cost to the parents. We were able to start up STUSA, however, to sustain low fees, we do need help. Thanks to You, Sheriff Paul Babeu we are able to continue to service San Tan Valley with a sports program.

Currently middle and high schools charge \$100 to play in school sports. In addition, there are extra fees for physical exams and uniforms that must be paid to play in school sports. Many parents cannot afford for their kids to play in school sports or other \$100+ leagues. As a result, there are students that never play sports in schools. For those kids that are fortunate to be able to afford to pay school sports fees, they still have to go through a try-out process and may not make the team due to lack of skill or just a little less talented than some of the other kids at try-outs. With STUSA our program is \$49 and all kids are put on a team, regardless of their skill level.

Since San Tan Valley is an unincorporated area, we do not have a Parks and Recreations Department to depend on. We do not have a City or Town representative's support. We do not even have our own STUSA home field or public park we can use for our sports programs. We run a great league and families know we are there for them and their children, we are too large for any Home Owner's Association (HOA) Park. We have outgrown our first location in an HOA park which we were able to use for free. With over 350 athletes that participate in our sports program per season and over 1,100 total members, the HOA parks and local schools are too small to accommodate parking and/or field space needed to run our program. Recently we began renting fields from Anthem Community. With facility rental fees and other league fees (insurance, equipment, uniforms, awards, software, training, etc...) we do struggle to cover all fees. This donation is a tremendous help in covering league's fees.

We were fortunate to learn about the R.I.C.O. Funds and how to apply for it. Thanks to you, Sheriff Paul our athletes and families can continue to participate in our program. Our league was lucky enough to receive a donation from the R.I.C.O. Funds. STUSA has been able to pay field rental fees and purchase necessary equipment and uniforms needed to support the league. R.I.C.O. Funds have been a blessing to our league and the families in so many ways.

Some of our volunteers grew up in areas where there were many gangs, drugs, cartels and violence on the streets on a daily basis. We understand how easy it is for San Tan Valley to turn into a bad place quickly. Spending some time and effort to help out a child to stay

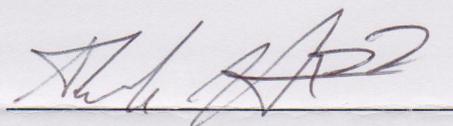
occupied in sports or other productive activities such as dance, cheer or any extra activities outside of school is vital. This does cost money to do and with a team effort from you, Sheriff Paul, and STUSA, we have been blessed to have a great group of citizens that enjoy volunteering their time to help our young athletes in our community stay healthy by running and playing while staying away from gang and drug related activities.

When kids do not have anything to do, they find things to destroy. The mind set is always to try to be cool first and destroying things or taking things that are bad for you (drugs, alcohol or smoking). We see our parks at night and see many kids walking and gathering in groups and usually are not doing anything productive with their time.

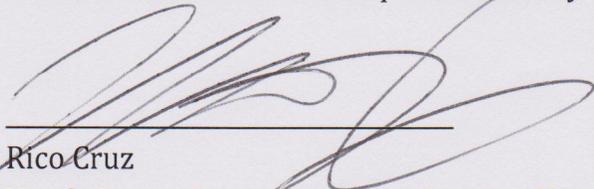
Having the R.I.C.O. Funds has helped to keep our cost low and able to have a place for these types of kids that we find late at night hanging out at parks or other public areas. If we could help just one child today that will prevented them from robbing, killing, drunk driving or hurting another citizen later in the future, all our efforts, time and money will have been worth it. We are confident we have already made a huge difference in the lives of many San Tan Valley citizens and their families.

We all thank you, Sheriff Paul for doing a great service by helping out the local sports programs along with other organizations that help keep our youth active and occupied in bettering themselves and the community. We need to focus on areas and issues that need most attention. Our kids are our future and they always will require the most attention. The R.I.C.O. Funds is not a hand out but a "Pay it forward" mind set with STUSA and our families. Our motto at STUSA is, "We are one, United." With the Sheriff's support and our hard working volunteers, we can help keep our community working together as one to help fight obesity, drug use and activities and avoid gangs to become stronger.

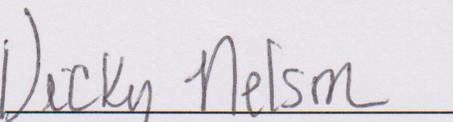
Thank you again Sheriff Babeu for your continuous support.



Ruben Hernandez  
President, San Tan United Sports Academy



Rico Cruz  
Youth Soccer League Director, San Tan United Sports Academy



Vicky Nelson  
Youth Flag Football League Director, San Tan United Sports Academy