

EQUITABLE EQUIPMENT

St. Mark's senior Dylan Taylor runs a organization set on making sports accessible

Story by
ANDREW NORSEWORTHY
Photography by
VICTORIA GOMEZ

Wake up, go to school, handle homework and hit the soccer fields for practice. If you are a member of St. Mark's School of Texas' varsity soccer team, this schedule, every weekday with an extra practice on Saturday mornings, is part of your normal routine. One member, however, has made it his purpose to help neighbors unable to get proper sporting equipment.

Seventeen-year-old Dylan Taylor, born and raised in Dallas, is a junior at St. Mark's School of Texas, a member of the school's varsity soccer team and a US Soccer Federation-certified referee. After 11 years in the game, soccer takes up a large part of Taylor's life.

In spring 2023, during his sophomore year, Taylor founded Positively Enriching Lives of Tomorrow's Athletes (PELOTA) to provide sporting supplies for neighbors and their children who aren't able to purchase equipment themselves. Pelota also refers to a sports ball in Spanish.

Taylor started out with paid camps to raise money for the first free camps and supply donations. He found the first campers by going door-to-door and eventually made enough money to run camps for free.

He then returned to his old middle school and ran drives, where items like soccer equipment, clothes and school

supplies were collected and brought to Casa View Elementary School in East Dallas. The Casa View neighborhood has an average median income of \$53,174, which is significantly lower than the median for Dallas as a whole.

“One of the things we do is we ask them if they have any specific needs. If not, we’ll donate what we have,” Taylor says. “But if they have specific needs, we use either the money we’ve raised in the camps to purchase those things, or we’ll try and contact the right person.”

Taylor also ran a month-long donation drive at St. John’s Episcopal School. Taylor remembers taking note of how the surrounding community had come together to support the charity’s cause, filling up his entire garage with donated supplies.

The charity accepts sporting equipment for every sport, including golf, and works with other organizations such as First Tee and the Dallas Stars Foundation.

PELOTA has also engaged in partnerships with St. Vincent de Paul of North Texas, YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas, the West Dallas Community Center, and Chosen Children Village Foundation (CCV) in the Philippines.

Despite the distance, the charity’s partnership with CCV is particularly special to him. Taylor recalled spending a great deal of time visiting the Philippines, where his father Michael was raised.

“One of the big things that I saw there was the extreme poverty of a third-world country, and I’ve been doing volunteer work here throughout my whole life, but I really wanted to find a meaningful way that I could give back from where I live,” Taylor says.

Despite receiving support from his family, Taylor remembers the difficulties he experienced while starting the charity.

“I’ve had to wear all these different hats, like founding this organization. I’m a one-man organization, pretty much. This has been my passion project,” Taylor says. “I’ve had to go door to door countless days passing out hundreds and hundreds of flyers to families to try and advertise my camps.”

Taylor says that in the past he had hired members of the varsity soccer team to help manage soccer PE camp, which has 20-30 children at any given time. He hopes to expand operations to host between 15 and 20 such camps this summer and five more this fall.

“So the goal there really is to just get as many campers involved as possible and spread awareness about this,” Taylor says. “Eventually I’d like to, with the help of St. Mark’s, possibly expand to other sports, so we can run camps for all different types of sports, and also get more people involved so we can reach more charities during free camps and generate more supplies.”

With college looming on the horizon for Taylor, he has begun plans to keep PELOTA running in partnership with St. Mark’s.

“One of the things I’ve been in talks with them about is establishing a board of directors so I can establish sort of a long-lasting organization that St. Mark’s and students there can continue to build and grow, so it stays as an established organization within DFW,” Taylor says.



CITY VIEW ANTIQUE MALL

LET’S TALK PINE!

Just in time for Fall, a large assortment of English White Pine has arrived! Several tables, large display cabinets, Welsh dressers, linen presses, chests of drawers and trunks are among the new pieces. Come see - they won’t last long!

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SEPTEMBER 26	Primary and Lower School Coffee
OCTOBER 17	Primary and Lower School Coffee
OCTOBER 24	Middle School Coffee
NOVEMBER 17	Admission Open House

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