

REDSKINS HELP DEDICATE PETERSBURG, VA., FIELD

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The Redskins were on hand to help dedicate the newly renovated Albert Jones Football Field in Petersburg, Va., on Saturday.

General manager Bruce Allen, Redskins great Mark Moseley and the Redskins Charitable Foundation joined the community celebration along with Petersburg's Department of Parks & Leisure Services, Good Shepherd Baptist Church.

Albert Jones Field was reseeded and new bleachers, lighted scoreboards, a public address system and goal posts were part of the renovation.

The upgrades to the field were made possible by a \$25,000 grant from the National Football League Grassroots Program, a partnership between the NFL Youth Football Fund, the Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation, and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).

The grant is part of \$2.5 million in field refurbishments allocated this year to community groups in areas surrounding the 32 NFL markets. Good Shepherd Baptist Church in partnership with the Rotary and others also contributed \$25,000 for the field renovations.

Allen went to college at Richmond University so he has a connection to the Southern Virginia region.

"The exciting part of the Washington Redskins and the NFL is what we're trying to do for [communities], as you've seen in the Washington area with a lot of field renovation," Allen said. "For me, going down to Petersburg is really exciting because I remember going there to watch Moses Malone when he was in high school for basketball.

"It's just part of our continuing efforts to keep our youth healthy physically. We have a lot of great educational programs that help the mind. We want to make sure their bodies are ready for the future."

Approximately 300 youth participated in football this past year, and the department expects to see an estimated fifty-percent increase with the renovated field coming on line this season.

"The renovated football field will help us attract more city youth to local football programs, and we want to recognize the National Football League Grassroots Program and LISC for their support," said Tami Yerby, City of Petersburg Parks & Leisure Services.

"Our athletic programs led by volunteers have helped save many youth from the streets, and now we hope to be able to reach even more," said Mr. Harold McManus, Program Administrator of the AAU Football team at Good Shepherd.

The event included a free football clinic led by Virginia State University head coach Andrew Faison and players and a free cheerleading clinic.

The NFL Grassroots Program, a partnership between the NFL Youth Football Fund and LISC, the nation's leading community development support corporation, has resulted in the construction or renovation of more than 225 football fields nationwide in the past 12 years. During that time, the NFL Youth Football Fund has granted more than \$28 million to revitalize playing fields in underserved neighborhoods.

Funds come from contributions by NFL team owners and the NFL Players Association. Fields are newly built or significantly renovated, with improvements such as irrigation systems, lights, bleachers, scoreboards, goal posts, and turf. Grassroots grants are issued once established funding thresholds are reached for each project.

LISC identifies local, nonprofit, neighborhood-based agencies that have an interest in building or refurbishing football fields in schools and parks in underserved neighborhoods. Through the program, the local agencies are provided with the necessary financing and technical assistance to improve the quality and safety of fields.

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