

Lori Youngs

### “What Youth Soccer Has Meant To Me”

I have been playing soccer for 13 years and have enjoyed every minute of it. The sport has taught me so many important lessons that I will continue to remember for the rest of my life. I learned that teamwork, determination, and dedication are some of the most essential elements in life. Not only did these skills help me in soccer, but in school and work as well. I learned that nothing comes around easily, you have to work for everything, and that sometimes when things get tough and I want to give up, I have to keep on pushing myself. An example in my life, when this concept came into play was during my junior year at the age of 16. I was diagnosed with a bilateral stress fracture in my lower back and I thought my soccer career had ended. Finding out that I would be committed to a physical therapy workout for the rest of my life was definitely an obstacle. But, my love and passion for the game overcame my discouragement and I gradually worked myself back into playing. I know that without the lessons soccer has taught me, I would not have made it through that rough time or be the person I am today. I would not have the optimistic attitude I do, or the willpower to finish things I've started.

The sport has also brought around amazing friendships and memories that I will cherish forever. My teammates and coaches have become family to me and without youth soccer I could not have developed these wonderful relationships.

Above all this, though, youth soccer has given me the chance to have 13 years of fun! I could not have asked for a better way to spend my time. Overcoming challenges and enduring all the hard work was tough but the most enjoyable thing I have ever done.

I cannot wait to continue playing soccer and see what other exciting things the sport has in store for me. I know that the college level will be strenuous, but after the amazing times I have had with the sport I will continue to love the game and smile when I think back on youth soccer.