

SHIELD BEARERS VILLAGE PROJECT

Welcome prospective partners,

My name is Eduardo Ramirez and I am the current president of **Shield Bearers**.

We are technically a football booster club, but with a community service twist. Our mission is to do much more than what a traditional booster club does and to instead be part of the village that helps raise the children / youth of Gonzales.

The football coaches at Gonzales High School see the value of using Football to reach out to struggling teens and they use football as an instrument to build better men and women of good character.

Shield Bearers does a lot of fundraising during the year but we have to balance the budget between normal booster expenses (Uniform repair, equipment replacement, preseason transportation) and our character development focus (transportation to camp, meals for community service volunteers, post-game meals, spirit packs for volunteers).

Thankfully our Coaches are very understanding and put an emphasis on the community service and meals we provide for the kids. However, we are looking for help to secure funding to serve the youth in our community so that the funds we raise can be used for the more traditional needs of our football program.

We've put together a description of our organization and some of the activities we run so that you have a better understanding how any donation you may grant us will be used.

If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to my email or cell:

eddy@footballboosterclub.com

408.981.9934

I look forward to hearing from you, even if it's just to let us know what you think we could do better or to give us a virtual pat on the back.

Regards,

Eduardo Ramirez

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Shield Bearers is a Football Booster Club with a Community Service twist. The purpose of Shield Bearers is to support Gonzales High School Football and GHS Football related activities that promote well rounded Student Athletes and encourage community service.

We do this by putting our kids through experiences that allow them to lead, mentor, serve, and to learn life lessons. We invite you to look at our website and browse through our blog to see some of the related activities we have been a part of in the past.

(<https://www.footballboosterclub.com/category/blog/>)

DEMOGRAPHICS

The community we serve is mainly in Gonzales and Chualar. According to information found online at: <https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/ca/gonzales> and <https://www.areavibes.com/gonzales-ca/demographics/>:

- 45% of the population works in labor intensive, blue collar occupations
- The level of education is low, with only 8.44% of the population over 25 having a 4 year degree
- 94% of the population is Hispanic, with Spanish also being the most commonly spoken language
- Median household income AND per capita income are both below the California and National average.
- 23% of the population is at poverty level.

HOW FOOTBALL FITS

Football tends to draw out a good cross section of the student body at Gonzales High School. It's a sport that both appeals to well-prepared kids with plenty of family support who are on the track to success, AND **"at risk youth"** who are unmotivated in school and on the verge of dropping out altogether. **Football is our opportunity to help this broad section of the student body** because the kids **WANT** to be a part of the team and are more likely to participate in our events.

A HUGE focus for Shield Bearers has been to make kids from this underprivileged community feel that they belong to a bigger group that considers them family and wants them to succeed. We want Football to be the incentive they need to stay in good academic standing and a place to find positive role models and support from both adults and peers.

We stress family values and open our events to siblings and parents of both the players, and coaches. We strive to build better men and women of good character who will be positive role models in our community and contributing members to society.

EXAMPLES

Here are some of the ways Shield Bearers has worked on this mission in the past:

- Started a Flag Football league for Gonzales youths ages 6-11 years and had our High School athletes (ages 14-18) be the coaches for the youth teams. This provides a forum for our 14-16 year olds to be role models.
- Taken "at risk" high school kids to a correctional facility at Soledad State Prison where the inmates give empathetic talks through the "We Care" program. Our kids learn the tragic results of good people who made bad choices. This was a life changing event for many of our kids.
- Invited Accomplished Olympic Coach Rudy Guevarra to speak on the struggles a small town

athlete faces while working to make it big in the world.

- Worked with the local Legion Hall to set up and take down American flags at the local cemetery, honoring our fallen Veterans on Memorial day.
- Also through the American Legion Hall, we've chosen a local disabled Veteran and cleaned up their yard and hauled away garbage to the local dump.
- We subsidized transportation for our kids to attend a Christian Sports Camp at Hume Lake, where the emphasis is not religion or sports but team bonding and letting kids know that it's ok to be vulnerable and ask for help.
- Worked with United Way to help "Spruce Up" a local Migrant Head Start center in our community.

NATURE OF OUR REQUEST

We would like your help in funding 3 activities of our program which we feel have the most positive impact on our kids. These programs were selected because we either saw a change in behavior for the better in our kids or they served as incentives for our kids to keep their grades up and participate. The activities we are asking for help with are the Hume Lake Camp visit, Game day nutrition program, and our youth flag football league. This, along with our annual visit to the State Prison Facility is what we internally call our *Shield Bearer Village* project. The name is in the spirit of the saying "It takes a village to raise a child".

Last year we were able to raise enough funds to be able to put on these activities and we plan to be able to do the same this year. But we did this by not purchasing much needed safety equipment or upgrading field and practice equipment (that has run past it's expected life use) for our football teams. We did this **on purpose** and with the blessing of head coach, Art Berlanga **so that our players could benefit in their overall development as individuals and students.**

We saw positive changes **and want to continue** our efforts but we owe it to our alumni and supporters to purchase traditional items for the program that they believe we should be buying. Items such as tackle sleds, chutes, agility bags, tackle rings, player spirit packs, JV communication headsets, Uniform replacements, water stations, and help with transportation costs as our district does not cover preseason game transportation.

With your help we can fundraise for the traditional football items on our own, AND continue to use Football as a vehicle to serve our community and help build better men and women for tomorrow.

Below you will find brief summary of the 3 activities we are asking help for.

HUME LAKE ACTIVITY

<https://youtu.be/TLXql7X9Zy0>

<https://hume.org/team-sports-camps/>

Hume Lake Camp is a great team building experience for kids and adults alike. Kids learn to open up and depend on each other and learn that their peers and coaches are an untapped support system that they can always rely on. Adults have their eyes opened by listening to the hardships and struggles that our youths are facing at home and in their daily life.

This program helps bring families together and is life changing for kids who feel alone, isolated, or with little support. We invite parents who may have strained relationships with their kids to come along, as the camp counselors have experience in crafting the right scenario for strengthening bonds between parents and child, and between team mates alike.

With your help we plan to provide transportation and would like to subsidize the cost of the camp as much as is feasible.

YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL ACTIVITY

<https://www.footballboosterclub.com/flag-football-2018/teams-2018/>

<https://www.footballboosterclub.com/flag-football-2019/>

By serving the youth of Gonzales, we also provided a summer activity for kids aged 6-11 to participate in over summer. The demand was so great that in our initial year we exceeded capacity in just 3 days of signups. We cap the number to make sure each youth player gets appropriate attention and has a good experience.

Our community is small, so when our High School athletes were asked to teach youths aged 6 – 11, they quickly starting hearing “Hi Coach!” from younger kids on the streets around town. Our High School kids quickly felt obligated to be on their best behavior as they didn’t want to set a bad example for the kids they coached.

We started this league because we wanted to put our high school kids in a situation where they would have to develop leadership, time management, and public speaking skills. They would have to plan practices, decide what to teach, and interact with both younger children and their adult parents. The fact that they also learned the importance of being positive role models and changed their behavior to be a good example to the younger kids in our community... that was an unexpected win!

There are some kids who will never play contact football because of concerns over concussion risks, so this is a way for them to experience the game with less risk. We tailor our rules to encourage competition but prevent contact as much as possible!

We’d like to note that we DO charge for this event in order to offset costs (uniforms, equipment, insurance). We also run a snack bar that is geared at making enough money to offset the costs of giving free concessions to our volunteers. With your help, we’d like to continue to feed our volunteer High School kids, AND offer the experience for free to all returning youth participants or at a subsidized rate to everyone.

PLAYER MEALS ACTIVITY

Some of our kids rarely get 3 meals a day and look forward to the post game because it’s the one (non-school lunch) meal they know they can count on being there. Before we started doing this, it was common to see our JV players wandering the stands on away games, asking people for a bite of this or a sip of that. After talking with the players it became apparent that some of our kids would eat brunch at school and then go 6 hours without eating, play a football game, and then not eat until dinner the next day!

We had to change that and now try to surprise our kids with food as much as possible! Whether it’s pizza after a community activity, or a surprise BBQ after a double day, or maybe just fruit snacks and granola bars before practice. They DEFINITELY look forward to the post game meal.

Parents and Staff members of teams we face tell us that our kids are spoiled with food and we love hearing this. We know some of our kids will take it for granted, but we also know that some of our kids really need it. We try to give away seconds and send kid’s home with left overs as much as possible. In fact, in the event that there are any proceeds or left over funds from other projects, we will likely just funnel it into this effort and buy some sandwiches to surprise our kids after a practice.

PROJECTED COSTS

Below are the projected costs for the three activities we're asking for help on. These numbers are projected based on our past experience and are meant to give an idea of how your gift or donation will be used.

Projected Expenses for Shield Bearer Village Project

- HL:** Hume Lake (30 participants)
Youth Flag Football estimated 85 youth participants, 30 High School participants
- FF:** Player Meals, 120 servings for minimum 10 games + Jamboree + scrimmage
- M:**

Expenses:	Hume Lake	Youth Flag Football	Player Meals	Totals
Hume Lake				
HL - Bus Transportation	3700			
HL - Camp Fee's (40 x \$150) Paid By Participants, subsidized by 1500	1500			\$ 5,200.00
Flag Football				
FF - equipment costs		500		
FF - Insurance		400		
FF - uniforms		2800		
FF - Certificates		25		
FF - Medals		250		
FF - Volunteer Meals (\$7 x 30 x 6 games)		1260		
FF - Refs, Clean up, Staff		Shield Bearer + High School Football		
FF-Location rental		Free (Through High School)		\$ 5,235.00
Post Game Meals				
Last Year we averaged \$350 per meal including utensils/plates				
M: \$350 x 12			4200	
M: preparation, transportation, serving			Covered by Shield Bearers	
				\$ 4,200.00
Totals	\$5,200.00	\$5,235.00	\$4,200.00	\$14,635.00

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Our organization is made up of 100% volunteers. We do not ask our board or members to contribute money because each member (including the board) easily contributes 100+ hours throughout the course of the year. It is structured as follows:

Board	Eddy Ramirez (Pres)	Angie Ramirez (VP)	Juan Leyva (Treas.)	Becky Avila (Sec.)	
Members	Nick Alvarado	Art Berlanga	Sonia Madera	Aviel Avila	Jimmy Carrillo
Honorary Members	Jessica Berlanga	Jaime Madera	Jeff Schweitzer		

Despite the 3 tier chart, our organization runs flat and rather lean. We have our 4 board members and up to 5 appointed members, adding up to no more than 9 voting members. We then recruit help from parents and interested members of the community to serve as honorary members. Members are invited based on their activity within our events and board members can only serve if they have been members before.

There is a close knit family environment in the group and everyone rolls up their sleeves and pitches in. Everyone can express their opinion and everyone can chair a committee, propose an activity, etc. but the voting is ultimately up to the 9 members (board plus 5 voting members).

We prefer this structure because it keeps “politics” at a minimum and discourages individuals who are not willing participate in the work effort as everyone’s contribution is visible. This also forces us to choose our projects wisely and be efficient with our time. Our group is busy outside of Shield Bearers so we limit our activities to events we all feel will make a difference.

By staying small and only reaching out to parents when we need help they are more likely to participate, especially after seeing the benefits their kids get from the activities.

FINANCIALS

Without diving into many details, here are two summary tables of our last two years of spending. As you can tell, we fundraise a lot more than we receive in donations. Over the last two years we spent 80 cents of every dollar on the GHS Football which includes our Shield Bearers Village programs.

2019 Summary Report			
	Net Fundraisers	\$26,467.14	75%
	Net Donations	\$9,000.00	25%
	Net Raised	\$35,467.14	
	Total Spent on Shield Bearers	\$5,772.84	17%
	Total Spent on GHS	\$28,434.79	83%
	Total Spent	\$34,207.63	

2018 Summary Report			
	Other	\$ 2,266.39	8.22%
	Net Fundraisers	\$16,748.55	61%
	Net Donations	\$8,567.43	31%
	Net Raised	\$27,582.37	
	Total Spent on Shield Bearers	\$2,986.42	22%
	Total Spent on GHS	\$10,894.37	78%
	Total Spent	\$13,880.79	