

New Mexico United donates equipment to Grants High School athletes

Written by By Dominic Aragon Sun Correspondent
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GRANTS — The Grants High School soccer team's athletes received a donation from the New Mexico United professional soccer team Dec. 17.

Through the team's Somos Unidos Foundation, the United sent a crew in a United vinyl-wrapped van — including player David Estrada — to the high school to make a donation of soccer balls and backpacks to the boys' and girls' team athletes.

"We know that Grants is taking care of their people this year, and sports, even though they can't play in person, is still a huge part of people's lives, and we want to support that," Chanel Wiese,

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the executive director of the Somos Unidos Foundation told the *Gallup Sun*.

Fans greeted the van as it arrived outside the school's east side entrance, just after 11 am.

The van was parked in the school's roundabout and one-by-one, student athletes parked in the designated areas, grabbed a backpack, walked in front of the van, and took photos with Estrada and Santa Claus.

Other stops for the team during the week of Dec. 14 included schools in Albuquerque, Roswell, Santa Fe and T or C.

With family connections at New Mexico United, assistant soccer coach Joe Garcia helped spearhead the event, reaching out to a niece who works in the United office.

"We were socially distanced and [this] was something the kids could look forward to," soccer coach and GHS teacher Charles Lundstrom said. "It's all about our kids."

Lundstrom was named the boy's head coach in November. The first-year head coach said the event was a morale booster for the athletes and the school.

"We'll bring [the United] back so we can get them on the field. They can show us some stuff. As a coach, you're always wanting to learn. You're always learning," Lundstrom said.

In total, over 20 student-athletes benefited from the event.

"We worked with the superintendent, Mr. Perez, to make sure that it was okay to do a drive-up event with limited interaction," GHS Principal Lane Widner said.

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“Right now, in the state of New Mexico, there are athletes that are struggling because they’re not having that team comradery, not getting to practice. I think for our boys and girls soccer, it was an exciting event to get kids enthused,” he added.

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