

2012 12.20 Submitted by [Tim Schulz](#), President & C.E.O. This article is worthy of front page! I am pleased that we have won numerous national championships, players going Division



I full ride scholarship athletes, players signing pro, etc. etc. but have a look at this superstar.

Though I live in Denver, Colorado, I have known this gal from the Rush in Anchorage, Alaska for a half dozen years. She is my hero. Yes, she is a good player but more important she is an amazing citizen. This gal not only gives her time to [R.E.A.C.H.](#), Rush Equipment Assisting Children, but also works with the [TOPSOCCER](#) program, Children with physical and mental disabilities. I want to recognize her and point out that the [United States Youth Soccer](#) association has done the same. She is the recipient of the **2012 US Youth Soccer TOPSoccer Buddy of the Year Regional Award.**

"I have helped out with the AK Rush Thunder TopSoccer program since it started over 4 years ago," said Laura. "AK Rush Thunder started when my best friend Rachel's mom helped Robert Devasie, get the program going. Rachel has a brother with Down's Syndrome. Over the years I have enjoyed being with him and teaching him soccer. I first went to Special Olympics and helped him play."

#### **Region IV – Laura Ellen Aspelund – Anchorage, Alaska**

Though she's just a sophomore in high school, 15-year-old Laura Ellen Aspelund has made an impact on TOPSoccer participants, as she encourages players like her buddy, Mark, to try new things and embrace the game and life. In addition to being a buddy, Aspelund is also a certified TOPSoccer coach. Aspelund maintains a 4.0 GPA while balancing her work with TOPSoccer, other volunteer efforts and her own playing career, which included a spot on the Alaska Olympic Development Program team.



Lau

ra, continues, "I was coaching at the AK Rush Youth Academy at the time but I felt like I was missing something. Once I started being a TopSoccer Buddy and coaching TopSoccer I felt awesome. I so enjoy sharing the happiness of playing soccer with the players, seeing their successes, smiles and great joy. I have actually learned lessons myself, about patience, kindness and the important things in life."

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Good job [Alaska Rush](#) and very good job Laura, Tim