



Community Life

NFL Plays A Different Game

(NAPSA)—The National Football League and its players have been quietly working to help give urban kids better places to play.

Over the past six years, through the NFL Grassroots program, a joint effort of the NFL Youth Football Fund (YFF) and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the YFF has invested \$10 million in almost 100 fields across the country where facilities were neglected, abandoned, or didn't even exist.

A variety of non-profit, neighborhood-based organizations, middle schools and high schools have benefited from the financing and technical assistance to improve the quality, safety, and accessibility of local football fields. With YFF's contributions, LISC has been able to leverage an additional \$31 million to help develop these football fields.

For the NFL, the decision to be involved was an easy one. "It is a longstanding tradition of the NFL to give back to those communities supporting us," said NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue. "Having safe, accessible fields is essential to young children today."

LISC ensures that community groups get the funding to maintain older fields and establish new ones, and that those groups have the community support needed to sustain the use of the fields over the long term. "When local residents have a sense of ownership and see themselves as central to



This football field in Jacksonville, Fla. is one of nearly 100 NFL Grassroots community fields nationwide.

the creation and maintenance of playing fields, those developments are much more likely to be protected and preserved for long-term use," said LISC President and CEO Michael Rubinger.

The newest field, dedicated in November 2003, is a turf field in Chelsea, Mass., a community outside of Boston. It was developed through a nonprofit called Chelsea Neighborhood Housing Services.

Community-based organizations are encouraged to go to LISC's Web site, www.liscnet.org for information about LISC programs in their areas. LISC, a tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) organization, is the nation's largest supporter of nonprofit community development. Since 1980, LISC has invested more than \$4.5 billion in non-profit neighborhood-based organizations for the benefit of low-income, urban, and rural communities nationwide.