



# BEESTERA FOUNDATION

*2025 Impact Report*

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# ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Beestera Foundation, Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Albany, NY and serves as the nonprofit arm of Beestera Soccer. Together, Beestera Soccer and The Beestera Foundation work in alignment to expand access to sport, develop young people through soccer, and create lasting community impact.

Beestera Soccer is a youth development organization built around the belief that soccer is more than a game. It is a platform for personal growth, connection, and lifelong learning. At the heart of Beestera is the Hive, a supportive community of players, families, coaches, and partners working together to help each individual thrive. Beestera's approach focuses on developing the individual within the collective, emphasizing both skill development and character.

This philosophy is guided by Beestera's THRIVE values: Team First, Hard Work, Resilience, Impact, Victory, and Enjoyment. These values shape everything from on-field training to off-field experiences, teaching players how to compete with purpose, support others, and grow through challenges.

The Beestera Foundation exists to ensure that these opportunities are accessible to all. Through scholarships, coaching education, equipment, and programming, the Foundation provides resources at no cost to participants from underprivileged communities. The Foundation believes every child deserves the chance to play, learn, and grow through sport, regardless of financial circumstance.

We are committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community. The Beestera Foundation does not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, or any protected status. Every child is welcome in the Hive.

# FOUR CORE INITIATIVES

The Beestera Foundation brings its mission to life through four key initiatives that work together to remove barriers, expand access, and create meaningful opportunities for young people.

Each initiative addresses a different part of the youth development journey, from providing free play experiences and essential equipment to offering financial assistance and mentorship for coaches who are looking to develop underserved communities. Together, these programs ensure that every child has the chance to participate, grow, and feel supported both on and off the field.

## **1. JUST PLAY**

Free, accessible soccer events for underserved communities. This includes structured play, unstructured play, volunteer coach development, and USSF Grassroots coaching opportunities.

## **2. GEAR UP**

Providing uniforms, cleats, balls, shin guards, and equipment to players and families who need financial support. No child should be excluded because of cost.

## **3. GAME CHANGERS**

Coach education and mentorship programs that help build knowledgeable, community-focused role models who positively influence youth.

## **4. GAME ON**

Scholarships that subsidize or fully cover camp, training, or program fees to create equitable opportunities for participation.

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

The 2025 year was a breakthrough year for the Beestera Foundation. Through scholarships, fundraising events, and community partnerships, we expanded access to soccer programs for families across the Capital Region and beyond. With the strength of the Hive community behind us, we continued to remove financial barriers and ensure every child has the opportunity to learn, grow, and belong.

## 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

### Scholarships and Financial Aid

- \$10,000+ raised
- 40+ full or partial scholarships provided
- Funding supported day camps, residential camps, futsal events, and private training

### Athletic Haven Partnership

Fully funded an entire season of the Athletic Haven Soccer Program, giving underserved youth consistent access to soccer, mentorship, and community support, and donated 25 soccer balls, and t-shirts.

### Community Engagement and Volunteerism

- Participated in 518 Day, supporting local service projects
- Coaches and staff engaged in community givebacks that brought the Hive spirit beyond the field

### Donations to Special Olympics NY

15 balls

40 cones

2 sets/colors of 12 pinnies

# THE CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

Our Second Annual Cornhole Tournament was a major highlight of the year, bringing together players, families, coaches, and supporters at Fort Orange Brewing for an afternoon of community and purpose. The event raised over \$4,200, all of which directly supported the Foundation's mission to make youth sports more accessible for underserved families.

The tournament featured a new group-stage format, followed by knockout rounds that added excitement and friendly competition. Attendees enjoyed raffles, local food and craft beverages, and the chance to support the Foundation through Beestera merchandise and donated prize packages. Prizes were generously donated by local partners, including the Albany Marriott, Trader Joe's, Druthers Brewing, Hand and Stone Massage, Fairways of Halfmoon, and Van Patten Golf Club.

"Events like this allow us to expand our reach and continue creating meaningful opportunities for young players who might not otherwise have access to sport," said Madeline Hammer, President of The Beestera Foundation.

The success of this fundraiser reflects the strength of the Hive community and its commitment to helping young people grow on and off the field.



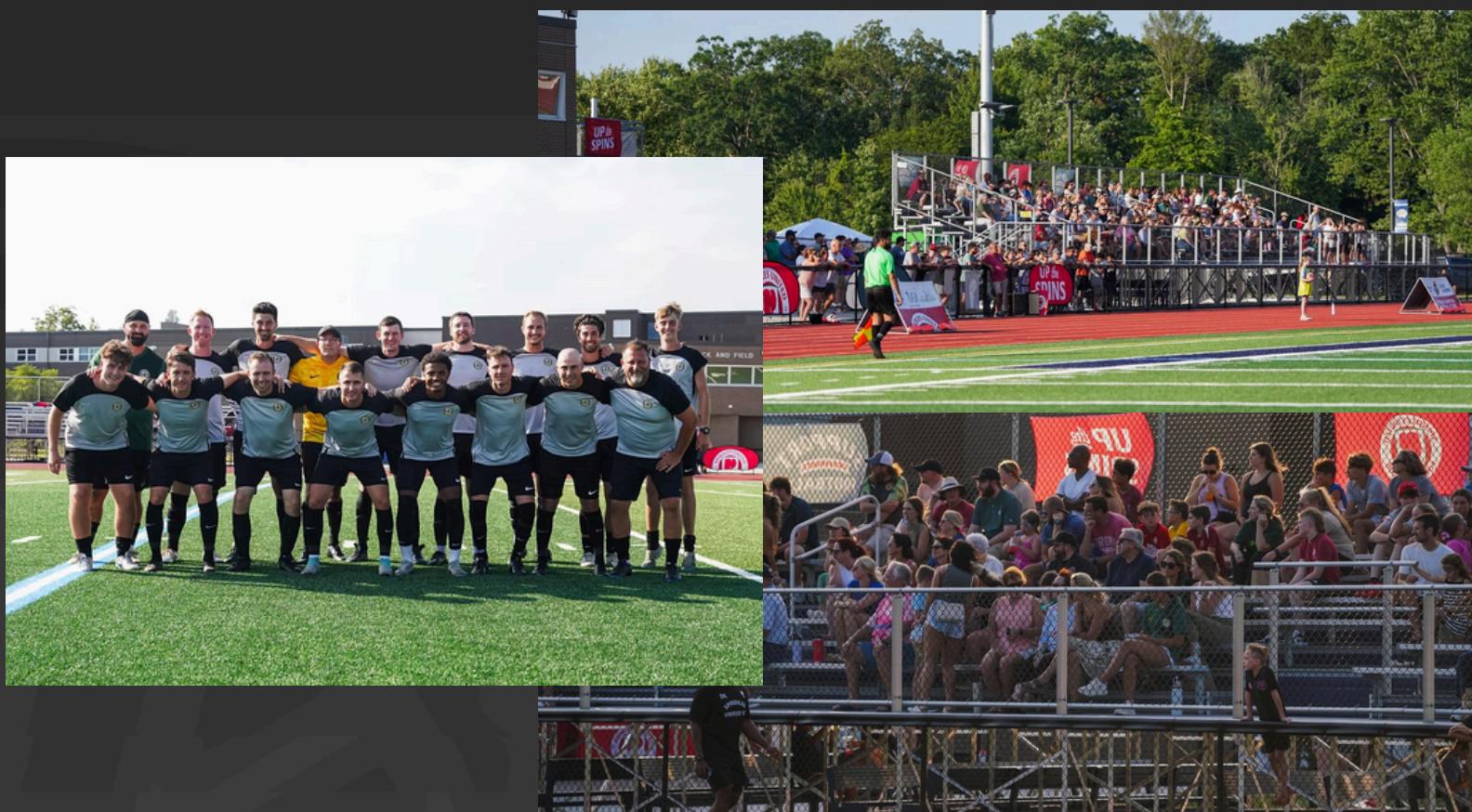
# THE GRASSROOTS CUP

This summer, Beestera were invited by Spindles United for the first time to compete in the annual Grassroots Cup, a community-driven showcase match that highlights local soccer culture and charitable support. Held at Alumni Field in Cohoes, the event drew more than 470 fans, creating an electric atmosphere filled with music, food trucks, local vendors, and excitement for the sport.

Beestera FC, composed entirely of Beestera staff, delivered a strong performance in a tightly contested match that ended 1–1 before Spindles won in a dramatic penalty shootout. Beyond the competition, the evening served a greater purpose. A 50/50 raffle raised \$421, with proceeds donated directly to the Beestera Foundation to support youth access to programming.

The Grassroots Cup reinforced the Foundation's commitment to community engagement, local partnerships, and expanding opportunities for young players through sport.

Thank you to Spindles United for the invitation and donation.



# EAT LOCAL DAY

On October 23, The Beestera Foundation hosted an Eat Local Day in partnership with Bare Blends and Blaze Pizza, turning everyday meals into an opportunity to give back. The initiative encouraged families, players, and community members to support local businesses while directly funding access to sport for young athletes.

On Eat Local Day, 25 percent of every order from Bare Blends and 20 percent of all Blaze Pizza orders were donated to The Beestera Foundation. Participation was simple and inclusive. Community members supported the Foundation simply by choosing to eat local, allowing small actions to collectively create meaningful impact.

Beyond fundraising, Eat Local Day highlighted the power of community-driven partnerships. Local businesses, families, and athletes came together around a shared purpose, reinforcing that impact can be created through everyday choices when a community is aligned.

Eat Local Day strengthened the Hive by connecting local partners with a mission rooted in youth development and opportunity. Funds raised through this initiative directly supported The Beestera Foundation's scholarship and outreach efforts, helping ensure more players have access to positive, values-driven sport experiences.



# MISSION: MILE IMPOSSIBLE

Mission: Mile Impossible was a new and highly successful fundraising initiative launched this year, engaging the community in a six-week challenge that blended fitness, fun, and purpose. The event raised \$5,047.29 from 19 donations, making meaningful progress toward the Foundation's \$10,000 goal and expanding access to Beestera programs for underserved youth.

The challenge was simple and engaging. For every \$500 raised, all Beestera coaches ran one mile. Donors who contributed \$150 or more could assign an extra mile to a coach of their choice, sparking friendly competition and plenty of laughs. Every two weeks, staff completed the miles together, with several coaches mic'd up to give supporters a behind-the-scenes look.

**In total, 147 miles were run, averaging 14 miles per staff member.**

Donor incentives added to the excitement. The top donor earned a free week of camp for the 2026 season, the second-highest donor received two private training sessions, and all donors who gave \$100 or more were entered into a raffle for these prizes.

Running from October 1 through December 1, Mission: Mile Impossible strengthened the Hive community and showcased collective generosity.



# PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT

The Pickleball for Impact tournament marked the final fundraising event of the year for The Beestera Foundation, bringing together players, families, and local supporters at True Pickleball in Latham, NY for an evening of competition and community. The event blended recreation and purpose, helping raise funds to support scholarships and expanded access to Beestera programs.

The tournament featured two divisions, a recreational coed bracket and a competitive men's bracket, creating an inclusive environment for players of varying experience levels. The competitive men's division added an exciting incentive, with the winning team taking home a \$500 cash prize, while all participants contributed to a shared cause.

The event was made possible through the generous support of Beestera Soccer and Destination Kia, whose sponsorships helped cover event costs, while additional gift and raffle donations were provided by local businesses, including Vent Fitness, Scarlet Knife, True Pickleball, Hand and Stone, Panera Bread, Biergarten, Afrim's Sports, the YMCA, and Beestera Soccer.

As the closing fundraiser of the year, Pickleball for Impact highlighted the strength of the Hive and the power of community-driven events. Together, participants, sponsors, and local partners helped advance the Foundation's mission of creating meaningful, accessible sport experiences for young athletes.



# GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

The Beestera Foundation is guided by a volunteer Board of Directors committed to mission alignment, community impact, and transparency. The 2025 Board and Staff includes:

## **Board of Directors**

*President:* Madeline Hammer

*Vice President:* Daniel Josepher

*Treasurer:* Ryan Wilkinson

*Secretary:* Luke Nathan

*Community Liaison:* Matthew Needham

*Vice Liaison:* James Beeston

## **Staff Members**

*Executive Director:* Leigh Howard

This leadership team plays an essential role in shaping the Foundation's direction and ensuring that donated resources are used responsibly to support youth across the Capital Region and beyond.

# 2026 GOALS

In 2026, The Beestera Foundation is taking a major step forward by expanding programs that ensure access to soccer is driven by opportunity, not circumstance.

## **Game On Initiative**

In 2026, The Beestera Foundation is launching Game On, a major initiative focused on expanding access to soccer for families facing financial barriers. Through this effort, the Foundation is committed to providing 150 day camp scholarships and 50 residential camp scholarships, creating more opportunities for players to train, grow, and belong within the Beestera community.

Game On represents a meaningful step forward in both scale and impact. By increasing scholarship availability, the Foundation reinforces its belief that access to sport should be based on opportunity, not circumstance. Each scholarship supports more than participation. It opens the door to mentorship, positive role models, and an environment centered on teamwork, resilience, and personal development.

Scholarship applications are submitted directly to The Beestera Foundation and reviewed by the Foundation's Board of Directors using established criteria to ensure transparency, fairness, and alignment with the Foundation's mission.

Game On also serves as a call to action for donors, partners, and supporters. Every contribution directly fuels scholarships that place young athletes on the field, in the Hive, and within a community that believes in their potential.

## **Just Play Program**

Just Play launches in February with a dedicated program space secured in Albany and a new partnership with HVCC men's and women's soccer players serving as coaches. The program provides youth ages 6–12 in the Greater Albany Area with a free, weekly opportunity to play, learn, and enjoy the game in a positive and inclusive environment.

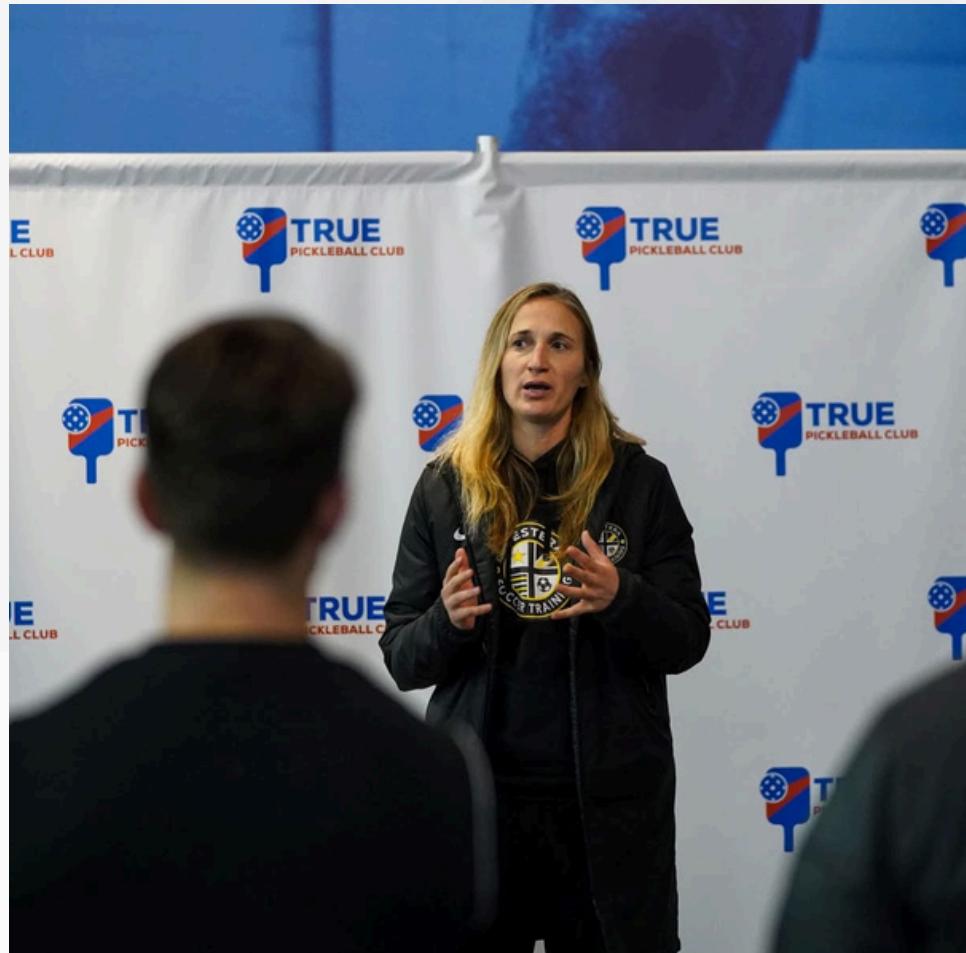
# 2026 GOALS

## **Game Changers Program**

Game Changers is designed to empower the next generation of coaches to lead by example, hold themselves accountable, and uplift others on and off the field. The program offers mentorship, hands-on experience, and guidance toward completing USSF coaching licenses, while also providing opportunities to serve through community initiatives like Just Play.

The program has already been shared with 20 local high school coaches, with plans to expand outreach through clubs and community partners. The Foundation's goal for 2026 is to support 10 coaches through the Game Changers program, strengthening the long-term health of the soccer ecosystem in our region.

With collective support, more players will step onto the field, and into our Hive.



"The growth of The Beestera Foundation this year is a direct reflection of the community that we are surrounded by and the Hive that has been built by Beestera Soccer. We are extremely fortunate to have the support of phenomenal coaches, devoted families, and committed community partners, all who play a role in ensuring that our four core initiatives make a difference in the lives of young players. We are excited to turn toward 2026 with even more goals to achieve and thank all who have been involved for your generosity and your passion."

**Leigh Howard**

*Executive Director*

The Beestera Foundation



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