

October 7, 2020

City and Borough of Juneau
Economic Stabilization Task Force (ESTF)

Re: 2021 Financial Support for Youth Activities

Dear Task Force,

It is safe to say that COVID-19 has disrupted our lives in more ways than ever could have been imagined and is lasting longer than anyone expected. The ESTF has been working tirelessly for the last six months to develop programs and funding solutions for citizens and businesses of Juneau. We thank you for your volunteered time, diligent work, and conscientious approach.

At this time we are not here to ask for funding from the remaining CARES Act funds, but rather draw your attention to an age group that is not receiving much attention and facing real challenging times. Juneau's student athletes are not only having to adjust to online learning with no social interaction, they have also seen their activities canceled or greatly altered. Since March when seasons were abruptly ended and spring sports were canceled, coaches have seen changes in their athlete's mental state of mind and are now coming together to express concern.

The Council on Recovery stated recently in a publication about COVID-19 "Students lost consistent access to friends and adult supports. While teachers, counselors, and mentors are doing their best to remain connected, it proves a challenging situation. Many teens are experiencing an increase in their sense of isolation, depression, and loneliness. If teens were already using alcohol and/or drugs, they likely continue to do so throughout the pandemic. As their stress increases and their access to healthy coping support decreases, they are more at risk for developing substance use disorders. It is important that caring adults (we could add in coaches/sports) stay actively engaged in supporting the adolescents in their life."

Tying this concern for depression and substance abuse, the National Council of Youth Sports stated "Physical activity releases naturally uplifting endorphins, reduces the stress hormone cortisol, and stimulates norepinephrine, which improves mood. When children and teens get their exercise through organized sports, the benefits can go beyond these chemical reactions."

It is imperative that we all work together to get our students back to their activities. It is proven that activities are healthy outlets for students and motivators for academic success. So what is our reasoning for writing the ESTF?

Activities programs are expensive to operate and rely heavily on the business community and local support from fellow residents. Normal fundraising opportunities are non-existent due to COVID-19 and programs are facing major budget deficits. In addition to being unable to fundraise, programs are facing new expensive COVID-19 protocols. For example, historically athletes have been housed out by host families while traveling to other SE communities. Now programs will be required to house in hotels with only two athletes per room, versus four previously. This means that the Thunder Mountain boys basketball team traveling to Ketchikan with 36 players, will need 18 hotel rooms. This adds \$4,000 to a

trip that already is without ferry options. A trip to Ketchikan now becomes a \$15,000 trip. Programs like this will have to decide whether they can afford to go or if they need to leave students home.

There are currently over 30 501(c)3 youth activity organizations in Juneau serving our kids from the age of 7 to 18. These 30 organizations are coaching hundreds of our youth in activities including swimming, basketball, soccer, baseball, volleyball, wrestling, dance, softball, and more. The coaches are mentoring our youth during a vulnerable growth period in their lives.

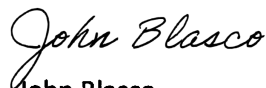
We are just 3 of the 30 local sports organizations that will need assistance to continue serving youth. Our situations are not unique to us, they are shared by all the organizations. The Thunder Mountain boys basketball team has a normal operating budget of \$50,000. Based on projected fundraising opportunities, the team anticipates a budget deficit of \$30,000. The Glacier Swim Club is operating at 50-75% membership, with decreased options to swimmers and increased cost due to Covid protocols, all while having to abandon its \$80,000 annual fundraiser for at least one year, perhaps more. The Juneau Soccer Club normally has 300 players in its membership, is currently running at lower than 25% capacity. Between estimated loss revenue from membership and fundraising opportunities, the Juneau Soccer Club anticipates a total loss by spring 2021 of over \$100,000.

Considering that all the of the organizations will be facing deficits in 2021, it is estimated that these youth activities 501(c)3's will need \$700,000-\$1,200,000 to fund their programs and continue providing the positive experience for our youth.

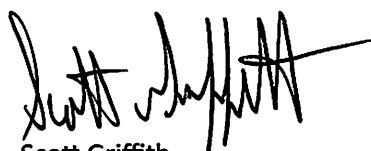
Should Congress issue a second stimulus package that does not have a 12/30/20 expiration and includes relief funds to municipalities, we ask that you remember our young student athletes who have had school and activities taken away from them. In order to give them the experience they deserve and desire, financial support will be essential.

Thank you for all of your hard work and future consideration. We are available to meet with the task force when the time is right to discuss our needs further.

Sincerely,



John Blasco
President
Falcons Full Court Club, Inc.



Scott Griffith
Director
Glacier Swim Club, Inc.

Whit Adams
President
Juneau Soccer Club