



TOWN OF HAMDEN

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Media Release

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Inaugural Hamden Cup A Success

HAMDEN – On the morning of Sunday, Sept. 6, on the soccer field located beside Hamden Middle School, two teams met for what will be the first of many annual battles. In the inaugural Hamden Cup Game, the Hamden Rovers of the over-40 Connecticut Adult Soccer League (CASL) held on to a 1-0 lead, outlasting Hamden United of the over-40 Shoreline Association Soccer League (SASL).

What made this game special, however, wasn't the outcome on the field, but the purpose behind the match. The teams had decided to come together this Labor Day weekend to donate equipment to and raise awareness about the fledgling soccer programs at Integrated Refugee and Immigration Services (IRIS).

Among other things, IRIS, an organization that helps refugees and other displaced people establish new lives locally, runs co-ed and all-women soccer programs for its clients. For the clients, the programs are a way to maintain a connection to a sport popular in their homelands and to meet friends and make connections in their new home. Additional information on the programs IRIS offers can be found at www.IRISCT.org.

By the time the final whistle blew, the teams had gathered more than two large bags full of cleats, shin guards, jerseys, and other equipment for IRIS' clients. Participants also made monetary donations to the organization.

"We all had a great time as friends and teammates," said Lewis Beilman, a Hamden United player. "We hope that these donations will help players at IRIS experience the joy we feel whenever we get a chance to step on the field together."

To close the day's events, Hamden Mayor Curt B. Leng presented the Hamden Cup trophy to the Rovers. Proclaiming Sept. 6 as Hamden Cup Day, he invited the teams to continue the event annually and to continue their work in the community.

"It is with great pleasure that I present the Hamden Cup trophy to the Rovers. The sportsmanship demonstrated by both of your teams for the sake of a truly noble cause is impressive and a positive example for our Town's youth. I thank the CASL and SASL for their efforts to support our local communities, and I thank the Integrated Refugee and Immigration Services of New Haven for sponsoring and maintaining various programs that help people in need and which breathe life into our neighborhoods."

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