

Soccer, studies collide at camp



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Above, Leonardo Soto, 8, practices his dribbling skills as soccer instructor Ian Moore looks on during the A.R.T. of Soccer Camp Thursday at Rock Creek Elementary School. At left, Charlie Serrano teaches campers about the radius and circumference of the center of a soccer field.

Serrano takes innovative educational program to the soccer pitch with youth camp

BY SARA SEYDIN
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Angles. Rhythm. Timing.

They are the building blocks for a successful life, and a bridge between academics and athletics, according to Charlie Serrano.

Serrano, a fifth grade teacher at Harvest Ridge Cooperative Charter School in Newcastle, is taking his A.R.T. philosophy to the soccer field. His goal is to help local youth connect what they are learning in the classroom to a sport they already love.

"I think it's been an epidemic that kids don't see how what they are learning applies to their life. You learn it because you are doing it everyday," Serrano said. "I want more kids to get what I have."

Serrano integrates geometry, science and music concepts into sports instruction. His first camp, The A.R.T. of Golf, was run at The Ridge Golf Course and after school at Skyridge Elementary School last year, with the help of The Ridge's Head Golf Professional Shawn Kelly.

A typical day includes one session with Serrano, who uses the sport as a platform to teach other concepts and one session with a specialist in the sport, who teaches the game, while integrating A.R.T. vocabulary.

Serrano said the inspiration for A.R.T. came to him through a near car accident. If the angles had been just slightly different, the collision would have taken place. Life as a whole boils down to angles, rhythm and timing, according to Serrano. In golf, for example, he sees how critical angles are, while music and sports are often matters of rhythm and timing.

After being impressed with the concept Elisa Herrera, coordinator for the Latino Leadership Council in Auburn, approached Serrano about gearing the camp toward the Latino community by offering soccer.

"When I was in school I remember always hearing guys were better at mathematics and girls were good at English," Herrera said. "I am excited to see that some of these girls can see math differently and maybe go further in it."

On Wednesday, the first day of camp,

CAMP: Kids get a grasp of geometry, sports

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Serrano taught campers how to mark the soccer field using geometric concepts. Then they went on to do drills with soccer instructor Ian Moore.

Jocelyn Guzman, 11, of Auburn, attended the A.R.T. of Soccer. She said she hopes to play on a soccer team soon. While most of the concepts Serrano covered weren't new to Jocelyn, she said it was a good refresher and other kids should come for the exercise.

"I just like soccer. We got to kick the ball and try making goals," Jocelyn said. "You should not be sitting watching TV and being a couch potato."

Jesus Guerra, 10, of Auburn, said his favorite part of camp was learning how to build the layout of the soccer field.

"We got to learn about the angles and how many feet and how big the soccer field was," Jesus said.

Jorge Gonzalez works as a promoter for the Latino Leadership Council. His daughter Leylu Delgadillo, 8, of Auburn, has taken both the A.R.T. of Golf and the A.R.T. of Soccer. Gonzalez said he was grateful for Serrano's innovative curriculum.

"I was really impressed. She came home talking about angles and mathematics," Gonzalez said. "This is something we really need to teach in the Latino community. Having things like this helps them learn."

Serrano said students like Leylu inspire him to continue with the program and work to expand it.

"She is still engaged," Serrano said. "She is asking questions and she is taking on a leadership role. She is not tired of it. That vindicates what I am doing."

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