

Coach helps teach life's lessons on the soccer field

Federal government employee helps students prepare for life's challenges

Oct. 23, 2006 – Moncton, NB – This is a special year for soccer coach Eddie Rutanga. His “AAA” 14-and-under soccer team, “Les Étoiles de Dieppe,” won New Brunswick’s soccer championship and competed in the nationals earlier this month.

“The kids had the time of their lives,” said the project development officer with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency in Moncton. “Although we didn’t win the championship, we played well against some pretty tough competition.”

Mr. Rutanga began coaching in high school.

“I believe in what soccer can do for kids. To play, they need to practice teamwork, discipline and respect. It’s a good lesson for life and the ultimate team sport.”

Growing up in Moncton, Mr. Rutanga played many sports and always felt a need to give back to his community.

“I have the best time when I volunteer. It’s the right thing to do, but it also feels good doing it.”

A few years ago, a 15-year-old player asked Mr. Rutanga for advice on her future. He advised her to concentrate on her schoolwork with the same intensity she gave to playing soccer. She took his advice, received a soccer scholarship and told him that his help was key to her decision to go to university.

“It’s great to know that I’ve had a positive impact on someone,” said Mr. Rutanga. “Yes, volunteering is giving, but I get so much back myself.”

Mr. Rutanga is one example of Government of Canada employees making a difference in their communities. Along with their regular volunteering, thousands of public servants participate in the annual Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GCWCC), the largest workplace charitable project in Canada. In 2005, federal public servants contributed more than \$29.5 million to GCWCC in 113 communities nation-wide. GCWCC 2006 kicked off on September 7 and runs until November 22.

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