



Giving LACROSSE

MOUNTAIN REGION

FUEL THE GROWTH ★ ENRICH THE EXPERIENCE ★ FIELD THE BEST NATIONAL TEAMS

Sheridan Serves as a Case Study in Growing Rural Lacrosse

BY PAUL OHANIAN

ONE DAY IN THE SPRING OF 2018, JR Wright was having pizza with his uncle Richard, director of the Sheridan Recreation District, which oversees youth sports in this Northern Wyoming community. Richard was lamenting the drop-off in youth sports participation when JR casually suggested the strategy of introducing lacrosse.

Richard quickly jumped on the idea and enlisted his nephew to start the process.

“My uncle immediately scheduled a clinic, sponsored by the Rec District, for the following month and all of a sudden, I had to figure it out,” said Wright, who was working as a commercial loans officer at the time. “I don’t know if anyone in town had even heard of the game.”

Charged with the task of organizing a youth clinic in a matter of a few weeks, Wright reached out to those he knew in the lacrosse community, including USA Lacrosse’s regional director Lyn Porterfield.

“Lyn helped us acquire sticks and balls through a USA Lacrosse grant,” Wright said. “We could not have done it without you guys.”

With 35 kids enthusiastically giving the new game a try, the clinic proved to be a big success. As a next step, the Sheridan Rec District soon launched an in-house league.

From there, Wright began to look to the future. He loved the idea of building towards a thriving high school program, knowing that today’s youth would



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become tomorrow’s high schoolers.

He also knew that the youth program couldn’t succeed without lowering the cost of entry, mainly for equipment. Wright reached out to suppliers and potential donors, eventually raising \$13,000 to acquire enough gear to supplement the original equipment grant from USA Lacrosse.

“This is rural America and families aren’t going to spend hundreds of dollars to equip their kids,” Wright said. “We had to create opportunity by having a turn key program.”

In recent years, the Rec District’s youth program has continued to grow, with Wright coaching the U14 team and working to attract more volunteer coaches. In 2022, knowing it was time for the next step, Wright formally launched the Sheridan Lacrosse Club with a boys’ high school team. In 2023, the club added a girls’ high school team and a 14U co-rec travel team.

“What he, and others, have done is quite remarkable,” said Shawn Maloney, USA Lacrosse’s regional manager for the Mountain Region. “This really is a success story of growing lacrosse in a place where there was nothing.”

- ▶ The USA Lacrosse Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that serves as the philanthropic arm of USA Lacrosse. The Foundation helps drive the three main pillars of the USA Lacrosse mission: 1) Fuel the growth; 2) Enrich the experience; 3) Field the best national teams. Supporting the foundation provides thousands of children across the country the opportunity to experience the gift of lacrosse. To learn more about the USA Lacrosse Foundation, please visit usalacrosse.com/foundation

National Scope, LOCAL IMPACT

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Each year, USA Lacrosse receives hundreds of applications for grants designed to **Fuel the Growth** of the game. Grants are available for equipment, player clinics and financial support. The USA Lacrosse Foundation is committed to raising the dollars needed to fund as many of these grants as possible. Philanthropic support from members, partners, and friends is critical in providing these opportunities for players, coaches, and officials in every region across the country.

The **Mountain** region includes **Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming**. Applications received during the 2023 grant cycle are currently being reviewed with award notifications going out later this year, which means there's still time to invest in the growth of the game in your own backyard!

Here is breakdown of the applications submitted from your region:

23

Total Applications

15

Equipment Grants

5

Player Clinic Grants

3

Financial Grants

\$118,595

Total Retail Revenue

280

Total Girls Impacted

345

Total Boys Impacted



On behalf of the players, families, and coaches of the Cedar Rapids - Iowa City Lacrosse Club, please accept our thanks and deep appreciation for your support of growing youth lacrosse. We just completed our third season of competitive play. In those three years, we have grown from a handful of kids giving it a try to nearly 100 participants."

JEFF KUETER

*Iowa City Lacrosse Club
Iowa City, IA*