



# Giving LACROSSE

PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION

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

## USA Lacrosse Grants Support Growth of Youth Lacrosse in Oregon

BY PAUL OHANIAN

**MARK BROWN HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH LACROSSE** for most of his life. Originally from Maryland, he was a defenseman on a state championship high school team, and later played on Virginia Tech's club team.

After college, Brown followed three of his childhood friends to Oregon, eventually settling in the southwestern corner of the state in a region called the Rogue Valley. While none of those three friends are still in Oregon, Brown remains and has become a staple of the local lacrosse community – one that he has helped to build over the past 20 years.

"There was really no lacrosse in southern Oregon when I arrived in 2000," Brown said. "It was and has been growing in other areas, like Portland and Bend, and we just want southern Oregon to follow suit."

Shortly after arriving in Oregon, Brown signed on as the coach for a start-up men's club program at Southern Oregon University. He remained in that part-time position for 16 years, stepping down as COVID-19 emerged.

Soon afterwards, he re-focused on the youth game and launched the non-profit Rogue Valley Youth Lacrosse Association (RVYLA), aimed at providing lacrosse access for boys and girls from Grants Pass to Ashland. He serves as both its executive director and a hands-on clinician.

"We want kids to experience and enjoy all that the game of lacrosse has to offer," Brown said.

Since its launch, the RVYLA has increased lacrosse



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exposure by partnering with public entities, community organizations, and local schools. Brown

is frequently invited to introduce lacrosse to physical education classes at area elementary and middle schools. Most recently, he has hosted after-school lacrosse programs and YMCA summer camps.

"PE teachers all seem to talk to each other, so once I got a good reputation, they all started calling," Brown said. "I guess that's good word of mouth."

After a slowdown due to COVID-19, RVYLA relaunched in 2022 with four boys' and two girls' teams. The growth continued in 2023, with close to 100 participants.

"Mark's dedication to growing the game in Southern Oregon is unmatched. Major wildfires, global pandemic -- literally nothing stops him and his desire to introduce kids to lacrosse," said Lyn Porterfield, Pacific Northwest regional director for USA Lacrosse. "He's a true champion of the game."

Funding support from USA Lacrosse has also played an important role in supporting youth lacrosse across the Rogue Valley. An initial equipment grant from USA Lacrosse provided assistance for the earliest RVYLA players. A second grant for girls' equipment helped double the number of female participants in 2023.

"The grants from USA Lacrosse have been instrumental for us to reduce the barriers to entry," Brown said. "The best feeling is when a kid catches the ball for the first time and has that mixed look of amazement, accomplishment, and pure joy. Once kids get hooked, they'll be the ones who help spread the game."

- ▶ 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](https://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 **Pacific Northwest** region includes **Alaska, California (NORCAL), Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.** 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:

41

Total Applications

31

Equipment Grants

6

Player Clinic Grants

4

Financial Grants

\$127,950

Total Retail Revenue

348

Total Girls Impacted

603

Total Boys Impacted



The USA Lacrosse Diversity and Inclusion grant allowed us to provide scholarships for two players that would otherwise have not registered. Both players really liked their experience and will be returning next year. This grant is helping us expose lacrosse to those who otherwise wouldn't be able to play."

**RICHARD YEE**

Santa Cruz County Lacrosse Association  
Santa Cruz, CA