

Enhancing Agaitas' Impact on Kosciusko County



AGAITAS exists to use athletics to provide opportunities for leadership, personal development, and real life change through Christ.

Kosciusko Leadership Academy 2019

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I. Executive Summary

a. Introduction to Agaitas

Agaitas was founded in 2012 by lifetime Kosciusko County resident Ryan Burgher. Ryan and the others involved with Agaitas had a desire to combine their passion to help children through athletics and their faith. Agaitas has expanded over their first six years growing from their initial soccer camp to an organization providing soccer, baseball and basketball camps impacting over 1000 Kosciusko County youth.

b. Current Kosciusko County Impact of Agaitas

Agaitas has continued its efforts to reach more children as well as expand its impact. What started as a single camp serving 32 campers has become a multi-sport, Warsaw-wide organization. Prior campers have returned to become instructors and resources have been added to help expand Agaitas and enhance their ability to impact even more youth county wide.

c. The Role and Impact of Interns

Ryan believes that the addition of a paid summer intern will allow for increased ability to schedule camps and maintain the ever increasing demands that the young organization faces. One of the simplest means of sustaining Agaitas future is through the introduction of additional aid.

d. The Future of Agaitas

Recent efforts to help sustain the future of Agaitas include partnerships, donations and contacts made through KLA and Warsaw area businesses. Maintaining the aid of interns will help provide future scheduling and increase their area of impact.

II. Introduction to Agaitas

Agaitas was started by Kosciusko County resident Ryan Burgher. Ryan desired to find a way to combine his knowledge and love of soccer with his desire to spread his faith while simultaneously impacting the lives of local children. Agaitas is the combination of the Greek word for love “Agape” and the Latin word for truth “Veritas”. At the heart of Agaitas’ values is their love of others because they know the truth of Christ’s love for everyone. Another of those values is that sports can provide a holistic approach to development.

A former soccer coach, Ryan feels that sports provide an amazing vehicle to provide an opportunity to impact children, provide positive leadership and share his faith. Sport-specific camps are constantly offered and advertised with price tags near \$150. Occasionally these camps may cost a family upwards of \$300 per child. Too many local youth may not have the opportunity to take part in these camps and benefit from the leadership and athletics that they provide. Ryan, seeing an opportunity to improve this situation and create a positive environment for local youth, decided to take action.

Ryan’s first free camp was held in the summer of 2012 and hosted 30 children on the first day. By the end of the camp, a total of 37 kids had taken part. Soon after, Agaitas was created. The Agaitas organization has grown since those first few days as they have worked to expand their outreach and spread their mission. Soccer is no longer the only sport offered as Agaitas has added basketball and baseball to

its list of camps. There is an international chapter as well as a girls only option. The values at the center of the organization have not changed however. Camps remain free and volunteers provide hours of needed aid and assistance.

III. Current Kosciusko County Impact of Agaitas

In 2018 Agaitas camps and events impacted over 1,000 people. Children who began as campers have returned to now be counsellors. Speakers have been added to the schedules and provide an opportunity to share their faith and ministry with the campers. The organization plans on another exciting and busy year in 2019. The number of campers has increased every year since 2012, including a 150 camper increase from 2016 to 2017. The growth from 2015 to 2016 was even better, as over 200 additional campers took part and the number of High School and Middle School volunteers grew by 50%. There were an additional 220 speakers who took part in spreading the word of Agaitas last year. These speakers provided amazing opportunities for children and their families to hear their ministry and provide an opportunity for more people in the community to become familiar with the organization.

Agaitas hopes to continue to expand these community networks and opportunities as they look forward in the future. One way that Ryan and the organization feel they can remain true to their roots and continue to meet their core values are by hosting Pop Up camps. Pop Up camps began in 2018 and are impromptu camps held at local mobile home parks. Three locations were chosen in

2018 to host the Pop Up camps. Through these camps at least an additional 300 children were impacted from Whispering Pines, Suburban Acres and Fairlane Mobile Home Park.

Similar to the traditional camps offered by Agaitas these camps are free and provide children the opportunity for athletics, positive leadership and ministry. In addition, Agaitas provides food for campers at these impromptu sessions.

Unfortunately, the organization has learned that in many instances, these may be the only meals the campers get on these days. It is situations like these that make the members of Agaitas proud of the impact they have the opportunity to provide. It is also the reason why people and businesses of Kosciusko County are so willing to support and aid Agaitas and their mission.

IV. The Role and Impact of an Intern

Although Ryan and the members of Agaitas would all agree that they love the time and personal sacrifices they give to help Agaitas grow, they also recognize the need for additional aid. We learned early in our meetings that one way he thought the organization could improve or benefit would be with the addition of an intern. This would be a new role that would allow someone to assist with the scheduling, advertising and other work that takes so much time. The members of Agaitas and their volunteer network are just that – volunteers who hold full time job positions elsewhere and who are also busy attending to the needs of their own families and core social networks.

A paid summer intern would provide the additional time that continues to be a challenge for the members of Agaitas to find, especially as the organization grows and hopes to expand. Early on Ryan gave us a goal – try to raise funds between \$500 and \$1500 to help fund his idea of an intern. Through our efforts taken at raising funds for Agaitas as well as Ryan’s efforts, Cody Boerema has been hired this year. He is a student at Grace College who is studying to become a minister and supports the mission and value of Agaitas. Cody is looking forward to improving the ability to schedule and promote Agaitas and their 2019 efforts.

The addition of Cody will also allow Ryan and the other members of Agaitas to be more effective in their individual roles of the organization. With the inclusion of Cody, three new additional Pop Up camps have already been planned for 2019. The new camps will potentially be held at Green Acres, Hide-Away Hills and Enchanted Hills and should impact at least another 300 children.

V. The Future of Agaitas

Through the organizations and contacts provided by our association with KLA we were able to introduce Agaitas to additional revenue and partnership opportunities. Many local businesses were introduced to the organization, including Instrumental Machine and Development, Alpha Manufacturing, OrthoCity BBQ, and Babsco Supply. Additional aid and services were volunteered by Roberts Sign, Reneker’s Sport Shop and Meijer. We were able to introduce Ryan to grant applications through the Kosciusko County Community Foundation that may allow Agaitas to fund a multitude of future camps, provide more meals, and have a lasting

impact in the years to come. In all, donations have totaled over \$5,000 from local businesses and community members. Finally, the combination of a brief conversation and a promotional trifold led the opportunity of a local minister to volunteer his land for future activities and space needed by Agaitas.

The addition of the Northenor Award will provide even more support to Agaitas as they continue to grow. The cash prize could be saved and put toward next year's intern. If they would choose to, Agaitas could apply the gift toward food and drinks for this year's camps. Advertising, media and print information could be distributed as well with a portion of the winnings. Organizations like Agaitas are critical to our community. Likewise, our community, its businesses and its people are just as critically necessary for supporting organizations like Agaitas and their values.