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Coach Helps Desert Hot Springs Kids Play Baseball

DESERT HOT SPRINGS, Calif. -

Playing sports can help build self-confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills in kids. One local coach is helping a group of kids in Desert Hot Springs get that opportunity, and he's making it happen despite the lack of funding.

"Baseball is one of those sports that teach life skills through baseball and we talk about that all the time," said David Farris, Coach of the Desert Eagles Little League Elite Traveling Team.

Farris, with the help of the community, is putting the elite team together for 13 to 14 years olds, which doesn't exist in Desert Hot Springs. He's helping teenagers play and participate in elite tournaments even though their families cannot afford to send them.

"They're pretty expensive tournaments, usually around 5 to \$600 per tournament that you get into, so, a lot of the kids that come from the impoverished areas aren't really going to get that opportunity," Farris said.

Elite teams are focused on developing and preparing youth baseball players for the college and professional level. For Felipe Vega, a catcher on the team, it's an opportunity for something bigger down the road.

"I kind of want to play college baseball and after that if I get to the draft, that would be awesome," Vega said.

When he's not coaching, Farris keeps busy fundraising, hoping people will step up to the plate and help pay for the team's travel and tournament expenses, while non-profit organizations such as Pitch in for Baseball", help donate new and gently used baseball equipment.

"We got some catcher's gears, couple bats, and baseballs, some gloves to make sure the teams fully equipped and ready to go into the season , so I can use the fundraising money for travel and tournament use," Farris said.

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Farris says many times he sees players with the skills to go far in sports, but they don't get there because of money. That's when teenagers with too much free time can sometimes get in trouble.

"Anything you can do to keep the kids off the streets doing better things. You can only imagine there are no movie theaters in town, no arcade, no other entertainment, so they don't have programs like this to get involved, they're basically stuck at home or doing something that's not very beneficial," Farris said.

"I think that's great because he cares about us and he just wants to see us play and have fun," Vega said.

If you'd like to help the team by donating money or equipment, you can get a hold of Coach David Farris at (760) 288-7000 or email him at dfarris@psusd.us