

*The Sanford Herald*  
**DaVita donates \$35,000 to Lions Club, SASL**  
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SANFORD — The Sanford Area Soccer League will begin its 2016 spring season next week with a renewed appreciation of the soccer fields at the Sanford Lions Club Fairgrounds.

Heavy rain and more than 500 bicycles left eight of the fields muddied and unusable in September, when SASL had much of its season still to play.

But SASL scrambled and found fields at local schools, the Lions Club worked diligently to repair the damaged fields, and DaVita Healthcare Partners, the company that sponsored the bicycle event in September, has provided hefty donations to both organizations.

"We didn't want to exit out of a community that had been an excellent host to us," said DHCP Group Facility Administrator Timothy Brown. " ... We did not want to leave a negative footprint in the town given the field condition that we left it in. The rain was torrential that week, and we just felt that we owed it to the citizens, to the soccer league, to the Lions Club, to make it right."

As a result, the Lions Club got a check for \$20,000 and SASL received a check for \$15,000 earlier this month.

"The club is quite pleased with what they did," Lions Club President Dan Hruby said of DaVita's donation. "From day one, they were nice and offered to help us out. They were quite nice to work with. [The money] will go into our programs. The Lions Club mostly focuses on projects to help the blind, so it'll go into our general funds. We came out quite a bit ahead. I don't think we spent half that [repairing the fields]."

Richard Holshouser, Lions Club regional fair chairman, said club members spent hours attending to the fields in order to have them ready to go for SASL's 2016 season.

"I want to commend the members of the Lions Club," Holshouser said, "for doing the job that they did to try to get [the fields] back to where we can accommodate the soccer league this year."

Brown, a veteran of nine Tour DaVita's, the name the Denver-based kidney care companies uses for its annual bicycle fundraiser, said DaVita cared deeply about leaving good impressions on the tour's host communities.

"We felt that by doing this," he said of the donations, "we could leave a positive impact and do our due diligence."

"DaVita has been great throughout the process," said SASL President Erin Borrell. "From the day after the event kind of closed up and I went to the fields to survey the damage, they have been really great with us in checking in afterwards.

"We were actually kind of surprised when they reached out to us wanting to give us this donation, which will really go a long way with us. We do have scholarships we provide for both recreation and travel players. I'm sure we'll use some of this money to continue to provide scholarships to those kids. We're very appreciative of this donation from them."

Brown said the Tour DaVita travels to a different city each year to raise money for different charities. The Sanford event was used to raise money for "Bridge of Life," which provides adults and children with kidney care, primary care, prevention and education, and children's camps.

He added that the location and charity for the 2016 tour had not yet been decided.

As for the fields, Borrell said they'll be ready for the recreation season which kicks off with a coaches' meeting on Monday.

"We're hoping to still improve their condition after the spring season is over," she said. "They are in good enough shape for us to move all of our teams back there, and we're hoping the weather will cooperate this spring and we don't have a really wet spring, because they're still in a fragile state. We're going to try to minimize the wear and tear on them."