

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

CONTACT:
Michelle Yadoo
Marketing Communications Coordinator
516-922-4100, ext. 231

20 April 2016

Goal! NY Cosmos Visit to Mill Neck Manor Scores

Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf recently hosted several visitors from the sports world to their campus. Students and staff alike were excited to welcome members of the Garden City-based New York Cosmos soccer team for a special live interview with Michael Lahoud, who plays the middle fielder position. Two students, Bryan Ulloa-Alfaro and Jonathan Velasquez, clearly fans of the sport, conducted the Q&A session with Lahoud. The segment was taped for the school's "323 News" broadcast, with kindergarten through high school classes invited to watch.

Lahoud was accompanied by Cosmos TV host Chelsea Cabarcas and Marc Dombek, the organization's account executive. It was through a chance observation by Dombek that resulted in the team's visit. While on a train to Manhattan one day, Dombek, who lives in a neighborhood close to the school, noticed the soccer fields on the Mill Neck campus. After some research, Dombek reached out to put together the interview event. Lahoud would also sign autographs, participate in photo ops, then demonstrate his skills and some basics of the game.

During the interview, Bryan and Jonathan asked Lahoud a variety of questions and in a short time everyone got to know the athlete who sat before them. They learned that Lahoud is originally from Sierra Leone, in West Africa, and has lived in the U.S. from the age of six. He grew up in the Washington, D.C. area and is an alumnus of Wake Forest University. With a laugh, he said "my mother encouraged me to start playing soccer to keep me out of trouble."

-more-

With that, Lahoud and his friends began playing the game every day during recess. “Instead of playing tag; it’s just what we did. I fell in love with the game,” he said. Looking at his two interviewers, he added, “So, it’s great for me seeing young guys like you interested in the game; reminds me of myself at your age.”

Rounding out the interview, Lahoud was asked how often the team practices (5-6 days a week) and what he likes to do in his free time (sing, cook and watch basketball). He wrapped up with some advice. “Love the game. Know that you’ll have highs and low; wins, losses, but just keep trying your best.” After a pause, Lahoud added, “And listen to your teachers!”

Afterward, Lahoud shared how deeply touched he was by the students’ thoughtful questions and the hospitality of the whole school in general. He and Dombek expressed their thanks to the Mill Neck teachers and staff who made the visit possible. Lahoud added, “Many of us don't get to witness the sacrifices you guys make on a daily basis to do what you do. I feel privileged to witness the good work going on at your school.”

While the rainy weather that day halted the planned outdoor skills demonstration to follow the interview, it certainly did not dampen the spirits of the students. The huge grins and enthusiastic cheers were evidence of that. Beyond the pure excitement of the event, the students were beneficiaries of a number of components, like teamwork, research and social skills, that made for another great learning experience. Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf is grateful for the kind expression of community outreach from the New York Cosmos!

Founded in 1947 by Lutheran Friends of the Deaf, Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf opened in 1951. It is part of the Mill Neck Family of Organizations, a not-for-profit group dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for people who are Deaf, or who have other special needs. For more information, please call 516-922-4100 or visit www.millneck.org.



Michael Lahoud, soccer player with the New York Cosmos, takes a moment for a photo op with Mill Neck student interviewers, Bryan and Jonathan.

Rainy weather unfortunately kept the skills demonstration indoors, but it was no less impressive!



###