

PORTLAND HEARTS OF PINE & MAINE WILDNESS

# SOCCER FOR GOOD

THE SOCCER CLUB OF MAINE
2026 IMPACT REPORT

# THE CLUB MAINE IS BUILDING

## OUR FOUNDING BELIEF






Hearts of Pine was founded with a belief that a professional soccer club in Maine could be a force for good in city and state it calls home. The ambition was not simply to bring a team to Portland. It was to use the world's game to make more space for people to gather, create opportunities for young people, and support organizations already doing important work across the state.

After two seasons and 38 sold-out matches, the scale of the response has given the club a bigger platform than anyone could have imagined. What matters now is how that platform is put to work. The stories in this report are part of that record: from a first match shared by a family in Lewiston, to after-school soccer programs in Portland's Community Schools, to small businesses growing alongside the club each matchday at Fitzpatrick Stadium.

> *"Soccer transcends cultures, religions, ethnicities, and races, bringing people together to cheer for each other. This club and its impact programs are about creating a space where everyone shows up to play, support, and take pride in their community."*
>
> *- Melissa Hue, director of the Office of Economic Opportunity*

> *"This team such a part of the community, and the community is part of the team. There's no way to separate them."*
>
> *- Justine Satterthwaite, Hearts of Pine supporter*

# MORE THAN A MATCH

**ACCESS AND BELONGING**





## A CLUB FOR EVERYONE WITH THEIR HEARTS IN MAINE

Every sold-out match at Fitzpatrick Stadium is a reminder of how strongly Maine has embraced professional soccer. Hearts has also worked to create pathways to attend a match for people who may not otherwise have the opportunity to. In 2026, the Community Ticketing Program distributed more than 1,800 free tickets through schools, healthcare organizations and local partners.

Portland Public Schools, the Portland Housing Authority, MaineHealth, and the City of Portland's Office of Economic Opportunity help connect tickets with families and individuals who might otherwise miss out. These partnerships make a first Hearts match possible for more Mainers and give community organizations another way to bring the people together.

## WHAT BELONGING CAN LOOK LIKE

The connection to Hearts can also grow outside of formal programs. Abigail Upham drove two hours from Rockland on her birthday so her children could meet players at a Club Shop signing. When a staff member heard that her family had never been to a game, the staff member offered personal tickets for their first match. That gesture was separate from the Community Ticketing Program, but it reflected the same welcoming spirit.

**$45,000**

VALUE OF 1,500+ FREE TICKETS DISTRIBUTED IN 2026

**38 MATCHES**

EVERY HEARTS HOME MATCH TO DATE HAS BEEN SOLD OUT

# SUPPORT LOCAL, PLAY FREE

## A PLACE TO PLAY



At Kennedy Park, the game belongs to the people who play it. Kennedy Park FC provides a path to competitive soccer without participation fees, while Kennedy Park Pickup at the public futsal court welcomes neighbors across generations and cultures. Hearts works alongside these community-led programs, supporting the relationships and existing pickup soccer culture that make Kennedy Park such an important gathering place.

Together with local partners, the club supported three free futsal tournaments in 2026 drawing more than 1,000 participants spanning several generations, with a fourth tournament scheduled for November 28th. Hearts provides prizes, and leverages community partners to provide nutrition and hydration throughout the day as well as offering educational programming such as financial literacy with Town & Country Federal Credit Union and healthy diet choices with Hannaford's Snack Pals program.

The club's Play It Forward initiative offers another way to remove barriers. Since 2024, supporters have donated more than 500 gently used balls, cleats and other soccer items, giving equipment a new life with children and families who need it. At Footy Fest, youth players could select donated gear to bring home. Beyond this work, Hearts has also donated merchandise and memorabilia to a total of 67 schools and nonprofits to support their fundraising.

**500+**

EQUIPMENT ITEMS DONATED SINCE 2024

**1,000+**

PARTICIPANTS IN THREE FREE FUTSAL TOURNAMENTS (YTD)

# EDUCATION THROUGH SOCCER

## *HEARTS OF PINE FOUNDATION'S* PORTLAND SOCCER PROJECT





Portland Soccer Project began at East End Community School in winter 2025, expanded to Talbot Community School last school year, and this fall reached the Biddeford school system. Developed by the Hearts of Pine Foundation, and modeled after Lewiston's Rosati Leadership Academy, the program uses a semi-structured play model in which soccer is a vehicle for building leadership, self-regulation, teamwork and confidence. With 65 percent of participants speaking multiple languages, the sessions also give students opportunities to form friendships across language and cultural differences.

Since January 2025, the program has served 150 students through 165 sessions and more than 320 hours of programming. Educators at Talbot have also reported improved attendance among some participating students who had been at risk of missing school—an encouraging observation that the club hopes to build on as the program expands.

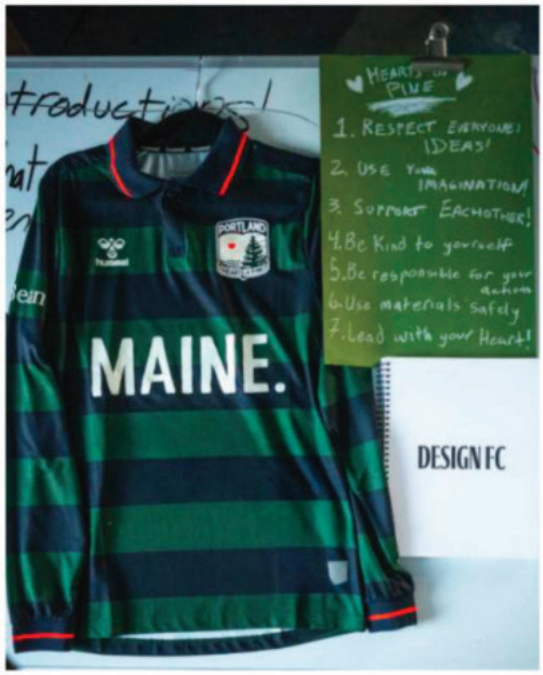
> *"The Portland Soccer Project doesn't just teach the game; it invests in our students' potential, providing them with the support and space they need to practice becoming the leaders of tomorrow."*
>
> *— Kelly Thornhill, Assistant Principal, East End Community School*

**150 STUDENTS**
SERVED SINCE JAN 2025

**320 HOURS**
OF PROGRAMMING TO DATE

# MORE THAN A GAME

## SOCCER, ART, AND STORYTELLING






Thirteen students at King Middle School spent 12 sessions with Design FC, hummel and Hearts of Pine, translating their experiences of Maine into original designs for a their own personalized pre-match jersey. The resulting project saw their final design worn by Hearts players at Fitzpatrick Stadium. Funds raised from the sales and an auction of signed, player-worn jerseys will support future programming.

Through The Telling Room, young writers have discovered another way into the sport. Junior Journalists shadow Hearts communications staff in the press box and attend postmatch press conferences to see how professional sports reporting works. Students learn not just how a match is covered, but that their own voices have a place in sports media.

> *"This opportunity has made me even more passionate about sports journalism and reporting, and I cannot tell you enough how much I truly enjoyed it."*
>
> *— Jack Matluk, Junior Journalists participant*

# BEYOND MATCHDAY

## PLAYER & STAFF COMMUNITY APPEARANCES





Hearts players, coaches and staff have participated in 220 community appearances over the first two seasons, making more than 10,000 in-person connections. Those visits have taken the team into classrooms, hospitals and community programs across the state, offering young people a chance to spend time with the people they see on the field.

In schools, players share their often very different paths to professional soccer. A conversation in a student's first language, or seeing a player with a familiar background, can make that connection personal. In Lewiston, more than 200 students and community members joined a free clinic with Khalid Hersi, Walter Varela and Jay Tee Kamara. Hersi grew up playing in Lewiston; returning as a professional put a familiar face on what Hearts of Pine is making possible for the next generation of athletes growing up in Maine.

**220**
COMMUNITY APPERANCES MADE ACROSS TWO SEASONS

**10,000+**
IN PERSON CONNECTIONS MADE ACROSS TWO SEASONS

# PARTNERSHIPS WITH PURPOSE

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS






Sometimes Hearts' most useful contribution is helping another organization reach more people. Hearts players attended Portside Real Estate's Audubon Equinox event, lending their time and visibility to a gathering that raised $21,750. The funds were raised by the event, with Hearts players participating in support of its charitable mission.

Other partnerships turn moments on the pitch into direct support for local causes. Through Saves for Youth Soccer, Kennebec Savings Bank pledged $100 for every save made by a Hearts goalkeeper during the 2026 season. In 2026, this initiative resulted in a $5,000 donation to Hearts of Pine Foundation's youth soccer programming, connecting the efforts of goalkeepers Hunter Morse and Kash Oladapo to opportunities for young players across Maine.

Oakhurst Dairy also connects the club's on-field performance to community giving, making a donation to the Hearts of Pine Foundation for every Hearts goal scored. In 2026, that donation totalled $4,800.

The club also partnered with Make-A-Wish Maine on a special wish reveal for 11-year-old Derick, and Hearts staff have led soccer activities for children and families at Camp Sunshine.

> *"Hearts went above and beyond to create that magic for Derick and his family! He will remember it forever and we are so grateful for this partnership."*
>
> *— Meredith Plaud, Make-A-Wish Maine*

## WASTE DIVERSION ON MATCHDAYS

Working with Garbage to Garden, Hearts of Pine diverted 86% of stadium waste from landfill through composting and recycling during 2026 home matches, up three percentage points from 2025. The effort served a season that welcomed more than 124,000 attendees.

# CARE BEYOND MATCHDAY

## A PLATFORM FOR OTHERS DOING GOOD IN MAINE







The club's public platform continues to help other organizations bring their work to a wider audience.

In partnership with New England Cancer Specialists, Hearts of Pine introduced a special Granite pre-match jersey honoring the strength and resilience of cancer survivors, their care teams, and their support systems. Inspired by Maine's granite landscape, the jersey featured a customizable awareness ribbon on the sleeve that players and supporters could color to represent a type of cancer that had personally touched their lives. Cancer survivors joined players on the field at Fitzpatrick Stadium to model the jerseys, helping bring their experiences and stories to a wider audience. Throughout the season, New England Cancer Specialists continued to spotlight Cancer Survivors, Patients, and Doctors as Community Captains at Fitzpatrick Stadium ahead of home matches.

In June, Hearts introduced its 2026 Pride collection, from which twenty-five percent of all proceeds directly supported EqualityMaine. Photographed at Blackstones, Portland's oldest operating LGBTQ+ bar, the collection raised a $1,259 donation to support the EqualityMaine work advancing equality and LGBTQ+ rights across the state. Hearts staff and supporters also marched together in Portland's Pride parade.

Hearts of Pine partnered with the Animal Welfare Society to help find homes for adoptable puppies named after club players. A special photo shoot introduced the pups to Hearts supporters, using the club's platform to draw attention to animals looking for families of their own. Nonprofits including Maine Needs and Furniture Friends have also been invited to share their work with fans on matchdays.

> *"Hearts have always been rooted in community. It's never just been about soccer. It's about something bigger. It's more than hope — it's purpose."*
>
> *— Angela Stone, Founder and Executive Director, Maine Needs*

# CARE BEYOND MATCHDAY

**A PLATFORM FOR OTHERS DOING GOOD IN MAINE**



## LEADING BEYOND THE PITCH

Hearts players have embraced opportunities to support organizations doing important work across Maine, contributing their time and using their platform to make meaningful connections beyond matchday.

Club captain Mikey Lopez delivered a keynote address at a Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition forum, lending his voice to conversations about belonging and community. His participation reflected a commitment to supporting the organizations working to make Maine a more welcoming place.

Mo Mohamed and Kash Oladapo volunteered with Caring Community Cuisine, helping prepare food for a fundraising event supporting the organization's vork providing meals to people facing serious illness. Their involvement offered another example of how Hearts players contribute personally to the communities they represent.




## STORIES TO INCITE ACTION

For Hearts supporter Jess, the club became part of the community she leaned on while facing leukemia. Soccer offered a point of connection with family and other supporters during a difficult chapter of her life. The Hearts of Pine film Win, Lose, or Draw: I Am Jess tells that story in her own community, making room for the experience of illness alongside the relationships that helped sustain her.

The screening was also a call to action: by sharing Jess's journey, Hearts encouraged people to learn about bone marrow donation and get tested as potential matches for patients who need them. At the film's premiere, dozens of community members registered to become bone marrow donors. The film is an example of how the club can use storytelling to help a personal experience reach beyond soccer.

# FREE EVENTS THAT FOSTER COMMUNITY

## HEARTS OUTSIDE OF MATCHDAYS






As part of the World Cup this summer, the club also hosted three free days of programming focused around major matchdays. Maine Soccer Summer saw a free watchparty at the State Theatre where 1,600 community members celebrated the U.S. Men's National Team's 4-1 win in their opening match. Portland residents and those visiting the city saw another big win for the USMNT at Monument Square where a large screen and outdoor watch party brought another 1,500 people together.

Working alongside Kennedy Park FC and Kennedy Park Pickup, Maine Soccer Summer culminated in Footy Fest, a free community event at Kennedy Park where people of all ages gathered to play pickup soccer, connect with local organizations and vendors, and take home donated soccer gear. The celebration also featured the Kennedy Park FC tournament championship and highlighted the park's vibrant soccer community.

The third annual Heartsapalooza also brought approximately 1,000 people to Thompson's Point. There were mini pitches, player appearances, live music from Connor Garvey and a donation collection for Maine Needs. The club's connection to local music has also extended to collaborations with artists including The Ghost of Paul Revere.

> *"I've been drawn to Maine because of the Mainers show up for their teams and their community. There is so much heart here."*
>
> *— Michelle Akers, Maine Wildness Founding Advisor*

**1,600**
ATTENDED STATE THEATRE WATCH PARTY

**2,000**
ATTENDED MONUMENT SQUARE WATCH PARTY

**1,000**
ATTENDED HEARTSAPALOOZA

# KEEPING IT LOCAL

## LOCAL ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION






Hearts has worked to make local businesses part of the matchday experience from the start. The club works with 22 Maine food and beverage vendors and 71 local business and community partners. Local vendors such as Rustic Taps, a family-owned Maine business, PB&ME and Brûlée Bike have become part of the experience at Fitzpatrick Stadium. The benefits can continue after the final whistle: PB&ME owner Bill Marshall told the Portland Press Herald that exposure at Hearts games helped lead to approximately seven additional catering jobs in 2025.

A City of Portland-commissioned study by the University of Southern Maine's Catherine Cutler Institute estimated $16.5 million in statewide economic activity and 145 jobs supported in the club's inaugural 2025 season. The study reflects activity that reaches local vendors, hospitality businesses and Maine workers well beyond the ninety minutes of a match.

> *"It's a much bigger picture. Currently 15-20 small, local businesses participate in vending at every game. Our menu uses local produce and Casco Bay seafood; the trickle down is full of community beyond the fan base."*
>
> *— Brice Bowman-Laberge and Amanda St. Peter, owners of Meet on the Street*

**22**
MAINE OWNED FOOD & BEVERAGE VENDORS AT EACH HOME MATCH

**$16.5M**
CONTRIBUTED TO STATEWIDE ECONOMY IN 2025 STUDY

**145**
JOBS SUPPORTED IN 2025 STUDY

# MADE BY MAINE

## ARTISTS AND MAKERS







The club's identity is shaped by the artists and makers who call Maine home. At 645 Congress Street, Portland muralist Ryan Adams created a four-story celebration of supporters and the club's motto, in collaboration with Portland Downtown and property owner Jamey Gaston.

At the Hearts Club Shop, more than 20 Maine small businesses and artists sell their work alongside official club merchandise. Jeremy Richardson of Bangor's Log Jam Vintage supplied reclaimed wood for the space, while artist Erica Sedler created a custom 16-foot banner. Yay!Studio artist Beth Hamilton donates a glass heart to Maine Needs for every glass heart sold through the shop.

Hamilton's initiative is an example of how the club's commitment to community can encourage others to give back in their own ways. By bringing local makers into the Hearts community, the club creates opportunities that extend beyond selling merchandise, allowing the impact to reach other Maine organizations through the generosity of its partners.

These collaborations give Maine artists paid opportunities to bring their work to new audiences. Local photography, original films, and music have become part of how Hearts share stories about the people and places it represents, while merchandise sales support the independent makers behind the many made-in-Maine products available at the Club Shop.

> *"I feel honored to work with such a great team of people that shares my pride in my hometown and has brought so much positivity and good energy to the city."*
>
> *— Ryan Adams, Portland artist and muralist*

# A FOUNDATION TO BUILD ON

**WHAT COMES NEXT**




The Hearts of Pine Foundation, established in December 2024 as a 501(c)(3), gives the club's community work an enduring home. It receives one percent of club partnership revenue, alongside donations from individuals and other philanthrtopic support. More than 400 guests attended the first Gala for Good in April 2026, helping sustain programs that make soccer more accessible.

Building on its fall expansion of the Portland Soccer Project into the Biddeford school system, the Foundation is working with schools and community partners to bring free after-school soccer to more Maine children and create additional neighborhood futsal courts. As demonstrated by Kennedy Park, these spaces can open the game to families who face costs or transportation barriers to organized play.

## THE NEXT CHAPTER

The next chapter also brings a historic opportunity for women's soccer in Maine. In May 2027, Maine Wildness will take the field for its inaugural USL W League season, creating a new platform for female athletes and giving young girls across the state the opportunity to see women representing Maine at a high level of competition. The response has already been extraordinary, with 5,000 inaugural season-ticket deposits claimed in less than an hour, before the team even had a name or crest. Wildness represents another opportunity to grow the game and build a community around a team that belongs to all those who have their hearts in Maine.



# A FOUNDATION TO BUILD ON

## WHAT COMES NEXT




Looking further ahead, the proposed stadium at Cassidy Point offers the potential to expand what professional soccer can contribute to Portland and the state. Beyond providing a permanent home for Hearts of Pine and Maine Wildness, a purpose-built facility could create more opportunities for youth programming, community gatherings and partnerships with local organizations. It could also welcome visitors to Portland and generate additional economic activity for Maine businesses. The vision is for a place that serves the community well beyond matchday, building on the relationships and programs already taking shape across the state.

> *"Hearts' impact isn't limited to what the club does itself. It's also reflected in what our community chooses to do because they are a part of it. From local businesses supporting their neighbors to supporters giving back in their own ways, the impact of this club was never going to be just about what we do ourselves, but about what we can inspire others to do together."*
>
> *— Gabe Hoffman-Johnson, Founder and Chief Community Officer*