



## The Cannon Blast



vol. 2

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## VSA Featured Article-



On the sidelines of the soccer pitch every weekend you'll see a set of proud parents cheering for their kids. It looks pretty normal: smelly cleats, grass-stained uniforms, and more soccer balls than you can imagine. However, the Jacevic's life is more than ordinary.

The family of four Miki, Eva, and their two children, Danis and Aida, proudly wear their VSA gear. Danis, who has quickly become a promising talent on his U12 NPL team coached by Fabian Lewis, has been playing with the club since U5. His sister Aida has always wanted to keep up with her little brother being just over a year apart. This is Aida's first year of Recreation with the U12 team coached by Bruce Bower and Travis Upperman, but this isn't her first year of soccer. She's made quite a journey to get to this point.

Aida was born with Downs Syndrome. Downs Syndrome is a genetic disorder that causes developmental and intellectual delays on a wide ranging spectrum. Nothing would slow down Aida or her parents, though. Just like many families that have children with special needs, there's an initial fear of the future and that their child might not be accepted by others as much as she is by her family. Eva remembers being scared of how Aida might be treated or isolated socially and looked down upon. However, in her first hours of birth Miki and Eve made the decision that their daughter was going to be loved and treated like any child. She would be given the same opportunities like every child should. Eva has learned as she shares her and Aida's story that they've been an inspiration to many, and she's found strength in her community.

Eva and Miki knew right away that the best therapy for Aida would be to have a sibling. Eva describes Aida and her brother Danis' relationship as magical. "They love being together," she says. "We raised them like twins." While Aida excels in piano and dance, there was one thing she had to do just like her brother-play soccer. You would think that soccer has been part of their lives forever, but Eva describes her relationship with soccer as one of disinterest and disdain.



## Weekly Awards

August 24th 2015



August 31st 2015



September 7th 2015



"I did not like soccer," she says. "I did not want anything to do with it. The only reason I got Danis involved in the first place was that it would be good exercise." It wasn't until a family trip when she saw Danis playing on the ball that she and Miki knew Danis was something special. Eva says, "Soccer has made him a better leader, a better athlete, and a better young man."

As Aida watched her brother, she wanted so badly to play, too. The family found a way with [TOPSsoccer](#)

. This program, which VSA is affiliated with, teaches soccer to children with special needs. Aida fell in love. She described it as an opportunity of a lifetime. She looked forward to any moment she could get on the field with her [TOPSsoccer](#) teammates and coaches. She believed it trained her to be a real athlete. Her coach and VSA's point person for the program, John Schlenker, was the biggest influence in Aida's life. Not only was he caring, he was strong and disciplined with the players.

At one of Danis' spring trainings, Eva saw a girls team training and dreamed of her daughter having that opportunity. Old fears crept up, fears of exclusion and isolation for her daughter, but she also remembered the inspiration her children have been and how VSA had treated their family well. She met with Technical Director, Matt Lacey, and was pleased to hear him say he was excited and willing to help make the transition to what Aida described as a "real" team. Aida was enrolled into [Rec](#) for her first season this fall. Her new coaches are amazing, the players on her team are so welcoming. She came home from practice with so much joy, saying, "Now I am playing just like Danis. I am part of a team. I've always wanted to be part of a team."

Aida made her dream come true this past Saturday in her first real game. Pouring rain could not take the smile off her face as her family and friends chanted and cheered her name. But they didn't cheer just because she was special; they cheered because she was part of the team. Before finishing her story, Eva wanted to reiterate how grateful she was for VSA, Matt Lacey, and all of the VSA staff that has helped make this transition for her daughter and their family possible. "This journey with soccer has transformed our family," she says. "It's helped us get healthy, take better care of ourselves, set goals and have discipline for our children."

Danis will be going to Barcelona in the November as one of the kids selected to train with the Barcelona Academy. Eva smiles as she describes her 11-year-old's emotion of playing where his heroes play. Little does that 11-year-old know, he's been a hero and an inspiration to his sister and to many others around him. Here at VSA, we want to thank Miki, Eva, Danis and Aida for sharing their story and being part of who we are at VSA. We are proud of all the families that represent this great club. Together we are VSA.



## VSA Team & Player of the WEEK

VSA Team  
of the Week

#WeAreVSA



Sept 14th - U10 NPL Elite Boys



U10 Boys got a great result on the weekend. They have set a standard with their work rate and it led to a victory over PWSI. Coach Fro had this to say "It is good to see how far along these boys have come along over the last year. Their understanding of our team shape, and willingness and confidence to go forward showed."

VSA Player  
of the Week

#WeAreVSA



Sept 14th - Mac Thorpe U14 NPL Elite Boys



Max Thorpe is this week's Player of the Week. Max set the tone early for the U14 NPL boys. He was a constant threat running at the goalie. Looking dangerous all day Max finally broke the stalemate. His goal was not only spectacular but ended up being all that VSA needed to get the 1-0 result over Chesterfields top U14 boys team.

# Recreation Opening Festivities!

Rain may have dampen the fields for first day of games, but it will not dampen our celebrations! The recreation season is finally here and we are kicking it off right!

On October 3rd- We will have huge festivities at Long Park, bring the whole family out for a day of fun. We will be celebrating our amazing Rec players and we will be doing it right!

- Moon Bounces
- Popcorn
- and of course SOCCER!



## VSA Upcoming Programs

Little Gunners: ages 2-4

Come join us for a fantastic environment for your Little Gunner and learn the FUNdamentals of soccer!

[REGISTER HERE!](#)



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