

Growing the Game

When the Stealth migrated to the north, it could've meant the growth of lacrosse in Washington was in jeopardy. However, the Stealth has made sure the local Sticks-2-Schools (S2S) program remained vibrant. Since 2010, S2S has put lacrosse sticks in over 30 local schools, exposing thousands to the sport while educating them on fitness.

Local lacrosse junkies (and current and former Stealth players), Chris O'Dougherty and Drew Snider were recruited into the program. O'Dougherty is the Program Coordinator and Snider heads up the Washington Instructors. ***"Drew and I have taken to heart the Stealth's vision for the program,"*** said O'Dougherty recently, as he loaded up another truckload of sticks to be donated, ***"Lacrosse is a fun way to help kids get educated on the importance of fitness and leadership amongst their fellow peers"***



Snider and O'Dougherty recently worked with the Amber Shelley, a physical education specialist with the Edmonds School District. ***"The Sticks-2-Schools program is greatly organized and engaging and our kids really related to it,"*** said Shelley, after a session at a local middle school. ***"The exposure to this awesome sport was an incredible experience for my students."*** ***"Most of the kids at these schools have never experienced lacrosse before,"*** said Snider, ***"so they're immediately engaged. That gives us a perfect entry to deliver the message of lifelong fitness and leadership."***

Sticks-2-Schools relies heavily on the volunteers and donations of the Washington lacrosse community. Through those efforts, they are able to introduce lacrosse to schools that wouldn't have the resources to offer the program, regardless of how valuable the message is. ***"With budget cuts, we cannot afford to supply class sets of new equipment,"*** Shelley said, ***"I'm grateful for the program's resources. And there was definitely interest for students to participate on our district's teams."***



While not the focus of Sticks-2-Schools, certainly an added benefit is the increased exposure that the program gives to lacrosse. The program has helped promote the exponential growth

that Washington lacrosse has enjoyed. There are over 100 boys and girls high school programs and many more youth teams starting as early as kindergarten in some areas. **“Unfortunately, this equipment doesn’t come free and we need support from the local community to help fund this program”**, says Denise Watkins, S2S President and Vancouver Stealth Owner, **“Getting kids engaged and active early in life is so important to life-long, healthy habits”**. If you would like to help local schools introduced this exciting sport to local school children, consider making a donation to Sticks-2-Schools. Donations can be made on-line at Sticks2Schools.org. All donations are tax deductible.