



# The Match Maker

With College Bound Athlete Scholarship Service, St. James resident Pat Grecco has helped more than 1,500 student athletes find the right school and scholarship.

BY CAROLYN BOWERS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
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After their coach, a high school athlete's next best friend should be Pat Grecco. This woman has found the right college and athletic scholarship for athletes in almost every sport. In her 30-year career as founder and president of College Bound Athlete Scholarship Service, she has helped more than 1,500 students and has a nearly 100 percent success rate.

Grecco moved from Long Island, New York, to St. James four years ago, and she is now looking forward to helping students in Brunswick County and New Hanover County. In fact, she has already secured scholarships for two local athletes and is working with several others in this area.





She has also recently gotten involved with Brunswick Blaze Lacrosse, the local traveling boys and girls lacrosse teams made up of students in middle schools and high schools from both Brunswick County and Wilmington. She recently teamed up with Dr. Bruce Corrie, former lacrosse coach at Duke University, Steve Corbett, West Brunswick boys lacrosse coach, and Kate Gentle, West Brunswick girls lacrosse coach and founder of Brunswick Blaze, to conduct a workshop on the opportunities to earn a college scholarship for lacrosse.

"If your son or daughter is a star athlete with an excellent academic record, you probably don't need me," Grecco says. "They will be recruited by college coaches. But if they are a second or third tier athlete with reasonably good grades, there is a lot of money available for them, and I know where to find it."

Grecco works one-on-one with each student to make sure they get in the school that best fits their needs. For out-of-town students she conducts interviews by Skype or FaceTime. She considers the student's academic standing, financial considerations, career goals and demographic desires as well as their athletic ability in matching the student to the school. To emphasize the importance of their choice of schools, she tells them, "It's a 40-year decision, not a four-year school."

Grecco coaches the student on how to promote themselves, helps them develop a resume and cover letter for their list of potential schools and, perhaps most important of all, offers encouragement and support until the student gets the scholarship.

She got into this business as an outgrowth of her experience with her own son and daughter, both of whom were good students and great soccer

players. But she is convinced that neither would have been accepted by their respective schools without having the additional credential of a soccer scholarship. Her son played four years of varsity soccer at the U.S. Naval Academy and her daughter played for University of Connecticut and was a three time All-America selection. Grecco was the quintessential soccer mom and volunteer while her family was growing up on Long Island. Her husband was a longtime soccer referee.

Grecco began her consulting business first as a hobby and that lasted until the day her husband told her that she was beginning to cost him real money in copies, paper, postage, etc. Finally she agreed to charge a modest fee for her services.

Her success stories are not only about students from the United States, but also about athletes from England, Belgium, Holland, Ireland, France, Japan, Mexico and South Africa.

She is especially proud of having placed several relocated third world country soccer players living in Clarkston, Georgia. This began in 2006 when she read an article in *The New York Times* that said the mayor of Clarkston had decreed that there will be no more soccer played in the town park. He was quoted as saying, "There will be nothing but baseball and football down there as long as I am mayor." Clarkston is a refugee resettlement center for those fleeing war zones from countries all around the world, and they are here by permission of the U.S. government. And yet they were being denied the opportunity to play their sport because the white middle class community of Clarkston wished they weren't there.

But these kids were fortunate. They had Luma Mufleh to fight for them. Coach Luma is a passionate, dedicated and demanding soccer coach who would



see to it that they played somewhere. Finally the political climate changed and they were allowed to play in the town park.

After reading this story, Grecco immediately got in touch with Coach Luma and offered to help these student athletes get college scholarships. Not long after that Grecco placed her first refugee, a young man from The Sudan named Shamsoun Dikori, with a full scholarship to Pfeiffer University in North Carolina. Because they didn't have the money to pay for her services, she did it pro bono. That is just the kind of person she is.

Grecco has also placed students with learning disabilities, and one young woman who is deaf. This lacrosse player has cochlear implants but can't hear the coach on the lacrosse field, so her coach communicates with her using hand signals.

Grecco has had success getting students scholarships at some of the nation's leading Division 1 schools. Scholarships for students in the graduating class of 2017 alone include such schools as Cornell University, U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, North Carolina A&T State University and Bryant University in Rhode Island. Her success is largely due to her expertise and diligence in researching schools by cross-referencing a student's attributes with the schools' features to find the right choices for each student.

When asked how she has managed to develop her huge network of coaches in every sport all over the country, this soft-spoken, unassuming woman just smiles and says, "By being respectful of them and listening to them. I never say 'This person is great. You should take him or her.' I simply say 'Here is someone I know of and you might want to look at them.'" And then she stays in





Top Row: Coach Katherine Norfleet, Ashley Norfleet, John Britt, Will Pickard, Cecelia Vergara, Coach Kate Gentle, Tanner Zemke, Ian Gentle, Myles Hansen, Parker Hughes, Hunter Dotson & Pat Grecco.

Bottom Row: Breanna Trudeau, Caroline Dolan, Isabelle James-Hutson, Elizabeth Norfleet, Gwenna Gentle, Mattie Pilcher, Braxton Powell & Bailey Gentle



the background, knowing that the coach wants to hear from the student and the parents, not a third party.

Her amazing track record and countless numbers of awards, honors, accolades and personal testimonials prove that her technique works. She was inducted into the New York Soccer Hall of Fame in 2008 and served as past director of the College Bound Player Program for the Long Island Junior Soccer League (LIJSL) and former chairperson of the Scholarship Committee, to name just a few. When she left Long Island in 2013, the LIJSL named a scholarship in her honor.

Co-author of the book *Winning your Scholarship*, she also is a frequent

contributor to sports and soccer magazines and has had several articles written about her.

Grecco is obviously in this business for the joy of seeing deserving young people succeed. "It gives me purpose in life," she says. "The joy of helping others never gets old and it is never boring or dull. It's just simply the best feeling ever."

Grecco says it's never too early to contact her for help. "Freshman year is not too early, but definitely by the beginning of junior year," she says.

She charges one upfront fee for her services, and you will not be charged any more regardless of how much time she spends on your child's case. The only additional small charge you could choose to incur is if you would like her to arrange for a video that you take of your child playing his or her sport to be professionally edited before you submit it as part of the total resume package.

As one grateful mother put it, "Pat is every parent's dream." ■

### Want to know more?

You can learn more about Pat Grecco and her services at [collegeboundathlete.com](http://collegeboundathlete.com).