Each of the founders has played soccer for most of his life. Alex has played in Washington, Jake has played in Jamaica, and Robert has played in New Jersey. Although the areas are different, the passion for the sport is the same. Whether it’s on or off the field, the game is always on their mind and they look forward to playing it after classes end. They all play together for the Lawrenceville School, a private boarding school. Whenever there are no sports and the weather is nice, they contact each other and their teammates to play. Even with the rigor of their of classes and limited time, they always find and make time so they can play the sport they grew up with and love.

Robert Park

“I’ve went to two mission trips in my life so far. I visited both Mexico and Bolivia in these trips and was amazed by the vastly different culture and living standards. I spent most of the trip in poverty-struck areas where people barely got by.

One thing I loved was playing with the kids. I knew that soccer was big in both countries and I had always heard about kids who played all day in the streets. When I got to see the kids play it was bittersweet. I thought it was so cool how they loved the sport so much, but was saddened by the fact that the balls and shoes the kids played with were so worn out. The shoes looked years old and the ball was a partially deflated $5 soccer ball.

When my church brought some soccer balls and gave it to the kids, it made me happy to see them playing the sport they love without fear of ruining or breaking their only ball. This was when the idea of Kicks for Kids began.

Fast forward a few months and all students get an email regarding new clubs. I wanted to make a club that could help kids play soccer, free of worry about proper equipment. However, I didn’t want to the project alone. I went to my friend and soccer teammate Alex, telling him about my idea and asking him if he wanted to help me. He was more than happy to help, but we had no idea where to do it. That’s where Jake comes in.

Jake lives in Jamaica and he started Cleats and Stuff Jamaica with his family in 2010. Cleats and Stuff Jamaica collects soccer equipment and gives them to local Jamaican kids who want to play the sport they love. I was close with Jake so I was surprised when I heard this. Alex and I were more than happy to add Jake to our club.

We wanted to do the same thing that Jake’s club had done, but instead of collecting in Jamaica, we’d do it in New Jersey. Since Jake lived in Jamaica, we’d give him the donated equipment for him to bring to his family’s club to then be distributed. Meeting Jake made the whole process a lot easier. We already had an objective but just lacked a specific audience. I’ve never visited Jamaica but one day I hope to. I want to play with the kids like I did in Mexico and Bolivia, except this time they’ll be fully equipped and ready to play the sport we all love.”