

# *LJSL Hall of Fame Inductee*

## **Merrick South Merrick Soccer Club**

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### *George 'Skip' Haile*

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Skip Haile is the epitome of an individual who belongs in the LJSL Hall of Fame. You will seldom find anywhere a person who is as dedicated to the welfare of our children and their development as soccer players. Skip's interest in soccer goes all the way back to his childhood in Merrick. He was a high school goalie at Calhoun High School and was good enough to play goalie at Manhattanville College.

For nearly 15 years, he has played a very active role in our club, rising from the guy who did all of the hard, dirty work that nobody else wanted to do, to VP of Operations, and then to his current role as President. While serving in this role, he has also worked as field scheduler and periodically lent his hand in managing the finances of the club. There continues to be nothing he won't either do himself or assist with getting done. These include setting up goals, obtaining temporary lighting for our practice fields so our older teams have a place to practice in the evenings, as well as helping interview coaching candidates. In fact, it is difficult to list all of the things he has done on behalf of the club.

As a member and then President of the Bellmore-Merrick High School District Board of Education, he was an important factor in helping our district leadership see the enormous merits of installing turf fields. His efforts benefitted our travel soccer players but perhaps more importantly, our middle and high school boy's and girl's teams in soccer, football, lacrosse and track and field all compete on some of the counties best facilities. It is hard to put into words how enormous an accomplishment this is and there are so many people who have benefitted by what he was able to help get done.

But it is his devotion to seeing that every child gets a fair shot to play soccer here in Merrick that sets him apart from others. Skip personally speaks with all of our coaches to find out how things are going. He helps coaches work with their parents in cases where there are issues and always knocks himself out to see that no child slips through the cracks and doesn't find a home in our community playing soccer. In especially difficult cases where a kid(s) can't find a team, he goes out of his way to speak with other clubs to ensure that these children find a place they can play.

Under his leadership, the club has seen growth from 290 players in 2008 to over 500 players today! This statistic speaks volumes about his commitment to and success in making our program as popular as it is today. It is for these reasons that George "Skip" Haile is a most worthy candidate for the LJSL Hall of Fame.