



# Colorado Rapids Year-End Report 2019

Prepared for: Colorado Rapids

- Wayne Brant, Senior Vice President of Business Operations
- Pádraig Smith, Executive Vice President & General Manager

Prepared by: Rev. Brad Kenney, Lead Chaplain

Period Covered: December 2018 — December 2019

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dear Pádraig and Wayne,

Perhaps the 2019 staff t-shirt says it best, *I survived the 2019 season!* What a year that it has been! At one point in the season, it felt that we were being revisited with the 10 deadly plagues in ancient Biblical times — snow, lightning, hail, plague, and more. It certainly was a challenging year on a number of fronts, but one which ended in a more hopeful place than maybe even where we began and certainly than at other points in the year.

This is why I selected the cover photo that I did for this report, as I believe it is a snapshot of the difficult season of 2019. But in the space where we go through hard times and hard things and we grieve and mourn losses — from games, staff, to even the death of two former players and a coach — we can emerge from such dark and difficult times with hope. We can look back on the storm that we just endured and realize that we have new found strengths and lessons learned for the future.

As the volunteer chaplain with the club, part of my role is to help people to endure such times and to even help them understand, once they have emerged on the other side what this might mean for life moving forward. As a reminder, our chaplains are highly trained and skilled at caring for people — whether people of Christian faith, other faith traditions, or even people with no faith background at all. We strive to offer **excellence** in our conduct and care; **authenticity** in our relationships and roles; **boldness** in our advocacy and counsel; **integrity** in our character and confidences; **passion** for the people, game, and environments we are invited into; and we strive to promote **unity** within the high pressures space of this elite sport, this global game of football.

But beyond the chaplaincy, we serve in a couple other critical ways — as a brief reminder. Our counselors embody the same values as our chaplains, and through our collaborative relationships and referrals, the counselors work to care for the mental health and well-being needs for everyone in the organization (athletes, staff, and alumni). We also realize that, at times, the club has entrusted us with resources that necessarily benefit the local and global community. We carefully inventory and fairly distribute gear and equipment donated by the club or items donated by the athletes, individually. This past year, we distributed nearly 1300 lbs. of gear (not all Rapids, but a lot) to non-profit groups and teams traveling as close as Mexico to as far away as Cambodia and Uganda.

Pádraig and Wayne, in looking back on 2019 each of us might wince a bit at what all was endured and the strain and toll that it took. But I believe that 2020 can be looked forward to with hope and a renewed sense of strength and vigor for the challenge ahead. May both of you “see” clearly, with 20/20 vision the needs of the organization, the people beneath you, and the way forward for the Colorado Rapids Football Club. And, however my self and my team can help we will certainly be there to go forward with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Kenney", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rev. Brad Kenney

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## SERVICE SUMMARY

Soccer Chaplains United chaplains and counselors provide direct support for 1st-team players, backroom staff, Development Academy teams, DA coaching staff, and front office staff, alumni and their families throughout the season. 2019 was the 18th year of providing care and support for the Rapids organization.

Our team currently consists of three people:

**Lead Chaplain:** Rev Brad Kenney      **DA Chaplain:** Rev Rubèn Rodríguez

**Female Counselor:** Brooke Ewert, LPCC

This past year, we began with 6 team members and lost three — each loss was a stepping away for family and work commitments, a part of the ongoing struggle of leading and managing volunteers. I have included the service involvements of those volunteers, who left at different points in the year, into our significant interactions for 2019.

We will be assessing the need for a bilingual chaplain for 2020; currently, DA chaplain Rodríguez is bilingual and can serve in an emergency capacity. We continue to look to grow and diversify the counseling service and team for the organization and this is a key priority for us for 2020 and beyond. Suite 12 continues to be a suitable place for meeting different members of the organization and having a space to work out of during the week.

### Rapids 1st-Team

The Colorado Rapids 1st-team category describes the actions and activities serving and supporting current Rapids athletes and their family members. Below are a number of highlight moments and then a summary of total interactions throughout the time frame of this report.

- Offered a 2-3-day/week presence at training; including 1-day for group meeting with interested players
  - Chaplaincy presence at 17 of 17 reg. season home games + 1 exhibition match + 1 Open Cup match
  - Provision of hospitality service and care for 1st-team families before, during, and after home matches
  - Provision of a child care attendant/helper in the family suite for 6 home matches
  - Helped with planning and officiating 1st ever, large memorial service in the stadium
  - Pastoral and chaplaincy support to 1st-team players with family members with cancer
  - Follow up support for players loaned to USL clubs
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- ◆ Chaplain Support: 115 significant interactions\*
  - ◆ Counseling Support: 12 significant interactions

\*The term "significant interaction" is designed to capture a broad stroke. It may be a 1-hour counseling session or it may be a longer event (such as a presence and service during a match-day or weekly training sessions). Often times, a longer event (training day) may have multiple points of support for 1st team players and/or staff, but unless a specific appointment is set, we only count it as one interaction. Each significant interaction is distinct from others and does not necessarily include support or preparation times.

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## Rapids Developmental Academy

2019 was the second full year of our chaplains and counselors serving coaches, players and family members with the Rapids Developmental Academy. One of the highlights (listed below) was the ability to bring back former players to the club to sit in on a panel and in some small group settings to help provide insight and encouragement into the DA program. Our work to setup a counseling program to trial in 2020 is not accounted for in our interactions below.

- Setup/provided 1 DA Life Skills Education Session:
  - Feb 5, 2019 — Topic: Pathway to the Pros
  - Provided housing for 1 DA player
  - Present at the DA Parent Orientation
  - Year-long work to setup a counseling program for the DA for 2020 implementation
- ◆ Chaplain Support: 35 significant interactions
- ◆ Counseling Support: 7 significant interactions

## Rapids Front Office and Backroom Staff

Soccer Chaplains United chaplains and counselors are also available for the front office staff, backroom staff, and temporary game-day and stadium personnel. One of the difficulties in accounting for all of our interactions with staff is that an interaction might happen in a less formal way — a conversation in a hallway or ways of supporting people in less formal ways are not captured or calculated in our interactions below. Below are a few highlights:

- Provided Ash Wednesday services for front office and stadium staff
- Supported several staff through life and vocational crisis and transitions
- Supported staff members with recent additions to their families
- ◆ Chaplain Support: 27 significant interactions
- ◆ Counseling Support: 21 significant interactions

## Rapids Alumni

This year, the “numbers” below do not adequately convey the amount of time that was spent with Colorado Rapids alumni — especially with the deaths of Fernando Clavijo, Junior Agogo, and Colin Clark. Colin’s service alone, there were a tremendous amount of hours spent supporting alumni. For the sake of simplicity, though, we are just accounting for the memorial service as 1 interaction. In addition to these losses, there was a tremendous amount of transition which occurred in and amongst the organization — where people transitioned to new or different opportunities or players/coaching staff moving on and needing support while waiting in a particular gap.

- ◆ Chaplain Support: 42 significant interactions
  - ◆ Community Support: 10 significant interactions
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## OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2020/BEYOND

Below are a number of opportunities Soccer Chaplains United sees to assist and support the Rapids organization as it continue to grow and develop its vision and cultural brand and organizational reputation.

### **1st Team**

- ◆ Key changes amongst the backroom staff and team staff will provide opportunities to grow and build new relationships and connect in chaplaincy and counseling support as needed and desired with a new group.
- ◆ Early in 2020 a CBA settlement will be important for getting the season off to a strong start, also with a shorter, more compact season similar to 2019, there will be critical needs to be aware of for 1st team mental and spiritual well-being.

### **Development Academy**

- ◆ 2020 will see a pioneering counseling program with the DA. Evaluations mid-year as to the effectiveness and value will help determine if it is a program worth continuing, although 6 month may not be long enough offer a complete picture.
- ◆ There continue to be some potential opportunities to work to create a trusted, housing network that will further allow the Rapids organization to host players from other parts of the country, or globally.
- ◆ There are opportunities to develop additional educational resources for Developmental Academy players and parents to help inform them on a number of different issues they may face in their time with DA and afterward.

### **Staff**

- ◆ Building on being present for many all-staff meetings and moments, referrals from department heads for staff that are struggling may help connect the chaplaincy and counseling support services that are available for all members of the organization.

### **Alumni**

- ◆ With the 25-year anniversary of the team and 10-year anniversary of the Rapids MLS Cup victory, 2020 will be important time to help with planning and hosting different reunion moment(s) with former players, backroom, and front-office staff.
- ◆ The deaths of former players Junior Agogo and Colin Clark as well as former head coach, Fernando Clavijo, have highlighted opportunities to incorporate more of past Rapids history into evolutions of the current club environment in honoring and memorable ways.
- ◆ Several alumni in the area have given feedback, that many times current Rapids staff do not know or realize they once played/coached/worked with the club. Opportunities exist to increase staff awareness as to localized alumni for recognition, partnership, events and other soccer and business-related moments.

### **Youth Club**

- ◆ There continues to be an opportunity to develop chaplaincy and counseling for the Colorado Rapids Youth Soccer Club, to bring professionalism and consistency across the Rapids brand.
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