Laura Aspelund (Alaska Rush 97G) was awarded the 2012 “Top Soccer Buddy of the Year Award,” from both Alaska Youth Soccer and US Youth Soccer Region IV. She has been a Buddy with the Alaska Rush TopSoccer program—*Rush Thunder*—for four years.

‘We are very proud of Laura for her efforts in volunteering for Rush Thunder,’ said Alaska Rush Technical Director Jason Leonardis. ‘I am very happy she was recognized for the number of hours she put in to make the program successful. She is a true asset to the progam.’

Laura is very dedicated to the program and only misses training when she is out of state. Not only does she act as a Buddy, she helps with administrative duties when needed and is always ready to lend a helping hand to clean up. Laura takes great pride volunteering for the TOPSoccer program. So much so she’ll even arrive late to her own competitive games, until the Rush Thunder session is over.

'When I heard that Laura Aspelund was awarded the 2012 TOPSoccer Buddy of the Year, I knew that it could not have been given to anyone more deserving or caring,' commented Alaska Youth Soccer TOPSoccer Chair Robert DeVassie. 'Laura has graciously volunteered her time to be a Buddy with the US Youth Soccer TOPSoccer program for over four years now, and each and every player has enjoyed her companionship as a buddy. There was one special player that grew even fonder of Laura, his name was Mark. Mark started off with not a whole lot of enthusiasm to the game, or not until Laura became his Buddy. Since then, Mark has improved both as a player and as a person. I remember his parents saying how much Mark has enjoyed playing soccer, and looks forward to seeing his buddy Laura. Laura has truly shown that when it comes to helping others, she will jump at the opportunity without hesitation. As her past coach, it has been my pleasure to see Laura grow up and become someone that is respected and loved in the soccer community.'

According to Laura's mother, Tami Aspelund, who is also Alaska Rush's R.E.A.C.H. Coordinator, 'Laura enjoys helping kids who struggle with challenges every day. She encourages them to try new things, challenge themselves and embrace life! The Rush Thunder (TOPSoccer) program is a wonderful and unique opportunity for Laura to invest in something that draws on her personal strength of character and leadership, blends in her love for the game of soccer, but is also fueled by her heart of joy and compassion for service.'

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Congratulations Laura!

For more information on Rush Thunder (TOPSoccer), please visit
http://alaskarush.com/index.php/programs/37-general/49-programs-topsoccer.

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