



Rush Soccer and the Inspireum Soccer Awards are looking for the countries most inspirational players. Among the semifinalists named is Lauren Luke from Washington Rush.

Inspireum Soccer Awards.com -Lauren Luke

Lauren (#18 in picture) was born into a “drug family” and as a baby she was placed in precarious circumstances a number of times. At the age of two, police rescued her from a frightening hostage situation and placed her into foster care. She spent the next two years bouncing between four foster homes. Lauren remembers arriving at Chuck E. Cheese with one family and leaving with strangers – her next set of parents. Although cared for, Lauren always felt insecure. “I would walk up to strangers and ask them to take me home,” she recalls.

Fortunately for Lauren, who was getting close to the age when children get stuck in the foster care system, a Great Aunt and Uncle reunited her with a younger sister and adopted them both. It is in this loving, stable home that Lauren developed into the young lady she is today.

You can hear more about Lauren’s struggles and advice to peers in her own words in the presentation she did at a school assembly on bullying by linking to her Inspireum Soccer Award website.

Lauren’s success on the soccer field is obvious. The tenacious 5’2” center midfielder recently accepted a scholarship to play for Gonzaga, a Division 1 College. Her U-18 Washington Rush team won a national championship this summer and will soon begin its final season. (Along with many of her teammates, Lauren has played on the same team since age 14.) This fall, she finished her fourth varsity season at Kamiak High School, where she served as team captain.

However, it is her compassion toward others and motivation to always do her best that makes Lauren an inspiration to family and friends:

- Lauren worked weekends as a hostess to save money to purchase her ticket to the San Diego Surf Cup because, due to her father’s health problems, the family couldn’t afford

the expense.

- Lauren often stays after practice to help with a younger Washington Rush team because “I want to volunteer and be there”.
- Lauren, who says she’s “really terrible at math”, took classes over so she could get her grades up and achieve her dream to attend college.
- Lauren told her life story at a school assembly with the message that “kids should be nice to everyone because you really don’t know what people are going through”. A fellow student responded on her Inspireum web page: “I was emotionally gripped by her story, squeezing out a few tears despite the fact that I didn’t even know her. I have been inspired by her perseverance, courage, integrity, and quite honestly, her beauty.”

Inspireum, located in Bend, Oregon, utilizes the power of social media, technology, and community-based marketing to share youth sports and service achievements that inspire America. The Inspireum Soccer Awards program searches the nation for the most outstanding young soccer players who inspire and lead their teammates, schools and communities. A national selection committee of soccer and media notables, along with a fan vote, will choose the recipients of \$25,000 in academic scholarships. The Inspireum Soccer Awards Winner, three runners-up, and two “fan favorites” will be announced January 3, 2012.

[Click here](#) for an article on Lauren posted on Goal WA.