

Subj: **The Lineup! Kiwanis Miracle League News - Feb 2013**
Date: 2/6/2013 3:09:17 P.M. Central Standard Time
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The Lineup



Wednesday, February 6, 2013

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Highlight Reel

Trophy Party a Huge Success!

October 21 we held our annual Trophy & Pizza Party for the KML kids and families - and what a party it was! Players and families alike enjoyed the pizza and, of course, the cookies! Over 500 attended the October 21 event - and the pizza went fast! Fortunately, Hy Vee made a second emergency run and we ended up with plenty of pizza for everyone. Trophies, donated by Jim Egr of USSSA, were a big hit with the kids. And our coaches were recognized with plaques and a huge thank you from the crowd. A great way to wrap up the season!



Harold & His Trophy!



2012 Coaches



2012 Trophy & Pizza Party

Our good friends from the Young Professional Connection presented the KML with a check for \$2,000 from the group's wiffle ball tournaments during the year. Thank you, Whiff-It!



2012 Whiff-It!

Tim McClelland, major league umpire, paid a surprise visit to the year-end trophy party.



Umpire Tim McClelland

KML Selected for ALLEGRA FootPRINT Award

The Kiwanis Miracle League recently received news that it has been awarded a \$1,000 grant for marketing services through the 2013 FootPRINT Fund. Allegra Marketing/Print/Mail awarded over \$10,000 to 12 local non-profits. The company is located in Urbandale.

Jim Eaton, co-owner of Allegra, said "Allegra firmly believes that these organizations are an integral part of our community and this is a way for us to show how much we appreciate their efforts in making this a great place to live."

Nadine Kastner, KML board member, and Jan Burch, KML president, attended a luncheon in early January to accept the award. The KML PR/marketing committee plans to use this award to update the brochures used in volunteer and player outreach.



Accepting Allegra FootPRINT Award

PWAG Visits the Kiwanis Miracle League

Perhaps you've not heard of PWAG!

PWAG stands for Plymouth Women Adventure Group. Sponsored by Plymouth Congregational Church, this group makes it a goal to experience adventures that enhance mind, body or spirit. In October, this "adventure" group paid a visit to the KML ball park.

After watching a game, here's what they said:

"What an inspirational adventure! It was a GIFT to see the young ball players participate - the smiles on their faces told it all. The Kiwanis Miracle League is a "Miracle" for the youth, the parents, and the volunteers. Our visit was cut short due to the rain - we have had days and days of drought and this morning, the rain appeared; but it waited for us to watch a few innings. Our Act of Kindness was to individually give a gift to the Kiwanis Miracle League."

Something tells us that PWAG will visit the KML again, don't you think?



Plymouth Women Adventure Group

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Players' Corner

It's Time to Register for Spring 2013!

Hello Players!

Guess what...it is a short time until we are out on the field! Can you believe it?

Well we have a little bit of work to do before we are ready to throw out the first pitch:

1. **Clinics:** We have three clinics yet this winter with the first one on **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9th** 9:30am until 10:30am at the Westminster Presbyterian Church at the corner of Beaver and Allison (very LARGE church) on the corner across from the Dahls. The other dates for the Clinics are March 16th and April 6th at the same location.

2. **Registrations:** I will be accepting them anytime, through the mail, email or at the Clinics. Please make sure ALL boxes are checked/filled in as it pertains to your child. (Please list the nature of the special need for your child/children.)

At the top of the form indicate the name of the team the player was on last year. It is our intention to leave each player on the same team as last year.

REMEMBER: Players Age Out at the age of 21. Please let me know if your child is in this category.

If you have any questions/concerns/issues do not hesitate to email me or call.
Email joycelbyrne@aol.com | Phone # 515-208-0822

Hope to see you all at the Clinics!

Joyce

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Volunteers' Corner

A Family Affair by Rob Baldus

Early in my marriage I used to kid with my wife, Bonnie, about having a child that would be an Olympic athlete. My plan was to live my athletic career through this unsuspecting child. Yes, I know, sad but true. Over the space of 21 years, we became parents to four athletic kids, three of whom took to soccer and running and one who lives and breathes baseball. Little did I know that it would be our son Isaac, born with Down's syndrome, who would actually be my longed-for Olympic, that's Special Olympic, athlete!

Thinking back on Isaac's early years, special needs or not, it never dawned on us that he would not participate in sports as long as his spinal cord received an all-clear from the doc. We started him off in Pee Wee baseball and soccer. Baseball ended up being his calling and he played on local Little League teams for a few years. Then we moved him into a competitive league for kids with disabilities before landing happily in the Kiwanis Miracle League in 2009.

Now, I was very involved with and fairly knowledgeable about coaching our kids in soccer and chasing them around cross-country courses. But when it came to baseball, I didn't have a clue. So I opted to limit my baseball involvement to the role of spectator, finally enjoying cheering one of my kids on from the sidelines beside my wife. Watching Isaac interact with the Miracle League athletes, coaches, and buddies was fantastic!

Well, my role as Miracle League spectator lasted precisely one fall season. The next spring Isaac's coach had to miss a few games. Somehow, Joyce saw right thru my spectator costume and asked me to sub in. By the next season, I had graduated from substitute coach to head coach! As an added bonus, Bonnie jumped in as assistant coach to make it a family affair. And, over five seasons, we've never looked back. Go Twins!

Game days are very important to Isaac. He hates it when weather forces a game cancelation and rallies us into the car so we won't be late to the game. Once we arrive at the field, Isaac immediately heads out to practice hitting. He is pretty self-sufficient and never shy about asking a buddy to pitch to him. Meanwhile, Bonnie and I get to work with our other coach, Emery. I can't tell you enough how smoothly our dugout runs with the three of us! And when Bonnie and/or I can't make the game, Emery's wife, Karen, steps in to assist. It's an impeccable coaching staff!

Our routine (I use the word "routine" with meaning, as it is important for both the kids and the coaches to have one!) keeps our dugout flowing with 18 players and 18 buddies in a type of organized chaos! Bonnie lines up the buddies and players and gives the buddies rules and guidelines for ensuring that their particular athletes have a great game. Emery finds enough buddies to go around and keeps the batting line up flowing by identifying on-deck and in-the-hole. Me, well, I bounce around like a pinball, getting in the way of Bonnie and Emery, joking around with our athletes, pitching when it's time to take the outfield. Most importantly, we all focus on making sure each player is valued and respected and has a great time! At the end of the game we hand out the treat tickets, and Isaac takes his pal Erin to the concession stand to get drinks.

Although every game somehow ends up in a tie, every game is full of its unique and memorable moments. Watching a player hit from a pitch instead of the T for the first time, watching as Owen stands in his wheelchair at bat for the first time, seeing Colby's eyes light up as he jokes with his favorite buddy, Jim, and watching in amazement as a blind athlete hits the beeper ball. These are just examples of many amazing moments for me. I love it!

Along with coaching, I am also one year into my 3-year stint as a level 1 board member for the Kiwanis Miracle League. During the monthly meetings I typically keep a low profile and just absorb the conversation and details about the program discussed. I am truly amazed at the time and effort the other board members put in to make this program a success. Before joining the board, it never occurred to me that these folks spend their entire Saturdays throughout the spring and fall seasons making sure everything runs smoothly at the games. WOW!

Well, enough rambling. We are looking forward to a great 2013 spring season and cannot wait to see you all on the field. Go Twins!



Erin with Isaac

Recognizing Our Buddies

KML president, Jan Burch, presents the 2012 KML Corporate Buddy Group Award to Wells Fargo Retail Services manager, Sumit Patel, at the October 9 Wells Fargo "Under the Lights" Night. This group of Wells Fargo employees adopted the Cubs and provided buddy support in both the spring and fall seasons whenever the Cubs played. What fun!



2012 Wells Fargo Night

Women from the Central College Softball team enjoyed the buddy experience on our last day of the 2012 Fall Season.



Central College Softball Team Members

Additionally, on December 6, Jan Burch and Bob Mitchell presented Dowling Catholic High School with a trophy recognizing the school with a Buddy of the Year Award! Thanks to Dowling's many students who have come out to play at the Miracle League!



Dowling Catholic Receives Award

Thank you HyVee Coupon Book Sales Volunteers!

In December, 16 teams of friends, families and players volunteered their time to sell the HyVee Coupon books in 8 area HyVee stores. Each book costs just \$25.00 and HyVee generously donates 100% of the proceeds to the Kiwanis Miracle League at Principal Park. Over \$2,000 was raised on the sale of the coupon books over two Saturday's. Additionally, we raised over \$150.00 in cash donations for the league. The book is filled with valuable coupons for local businesses, and includes \$25.00 in coupons to HyVee. If you are interested in purchasing a coupon book, ask for it at your local HyVee store customer service counter or email Nadine Kastner at Nadine.Kastner@Meredith.com. Buy one today...100% of the proceeds benefits our players!

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Board Corner

From the Board

Even though we're not playing ball at the KML ball park, there's still work to be done behind the scenes.

The KML Board of Directors held its annual meeting on November 15 and re-elected all officers and board members with the exception of one. We say good-bye to Ron Heggen who has ably served as a board member since 2009. Never fear, we haven't lost our official game day scorekeeper! We know he will continue not only to score each game, but also to help with trees, flower pots, and shrubs, as our "unofficial" master gardener. Thanks, Ron, for three years of service on the KML board.

Our 2012-13 officers and directors include:

Jan Burch, president, Des Moines & Ankeny Kiwanis
 Joyce Byrne, vice president, Northwest Kiwanis
 Carol Stone, secretary, Des Moines Kiwanis
 Al Knudsen, treasurer, Des Moines Kiwanis
 Bob Mitchell, immediate past president, Des Moines & Ankeny Kiwanis
 Becky Gruening, Des Moines Kiwanis
 Steve Scott, Des Moines Kiwanis
 Tom Pflanz, Des Moines Kiwanis
 Will Sales, player/family/coach
 Nadine Kastner, player/family/coach
 Rob Baldus, player/family/coach
 Bill Keck, Des Moines Kiwanis
 Ron Peterson, West Des Moines Kiwanis
 Daryl Pietersen, West Des Moines Kiwanis
 Kerry Walter-Ashby, Ankeny Kiwanis
 Russ Bitterman, Des Moines Kiwanis

Thanks to all for again volunteering their time and talents to serve on our KML Board of Directors.



KML Board at Trophy Party

News from the KML Fundraising Committee

TEAM SPONSORS NEEDED FOR THE 2013 SEASON

It's that time of year again when the KML board will be actively soliciting team sponsors for the 2013 season. Here's your chance to own a part of a baseball team and feel good doing it!

Contribute \$500 for a team sponsorship and you will receive:

- A vinyl banner to be hung on the dugouts for the spring AND fall seasons
- A listing on the KML web site
- Recognition on our annual contributors' board
- Listings in various KML brochures, handouts

Please contact Jan Burch at burchhr@aol.com or 457.7691 if you would like more information.

The spring season is right around the corner--Opening Day is Saturday, May 11.

Ankeny Miracle Park is Underway!

Our KML players and families tossed the first shovel(s) at the groundbreaking festivities on September 5 for the new Ankeny Miracle Park project in Ankeny. The Ankeny Kiwanis Club is spearheading the effort to raise \$1.2 million throughout the community for a Miracle League field and an All Inclusive Playground. Watch for further updates!



AMP Kids & Shovels

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Upcoming Events

February 9	Registration Clinic at Westminster Presbyterian Church
March 16	Registration Clinic at Westminster Presbyterian Church
April 6	Registration Clinic at Westminster Presbyterian Church
May 4	Whif-It! Tournament at Campbell Park
May 11	Opening Day - PLAY BALL!!

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Kiwanis



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The Kiwanis Miracle League's quarterly newsletter *The Lineup* is published via **WinM@il**, publisher Kathryn Towner kt@wincommunications.com. Please direct questions or comments to the editors: Carol Stone, West Bank, cstone@westbankiowa.com or Jan Burch, Jan Burch & Associates, Burchhr@aol.com.

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Published by **WinM@il**
1-866-Win-Mail

This message was sent to burchhr@aol.com from:

Miracle League | 505 5th Avenue, Ste 302 | Des Moines, IA 50309

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