



# The Line Up

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Jan Burch, Editor | Article submissions always welcome. | March, 2026

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## 2026 SPRING ISSUE

### This Issue's Topics:

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- ALL STAR 2025 Weekend, St. Louis
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# Kiwanis Miracle League



**Spring Season Opens May 9!**

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## **ALL STAR Weekend 2025, St. Louis**

The Kiwanis Miracle League belongs to the Miracle League Association, based in Georgia. One of the benefits of belonging is the ability to send a player or two to the Association's annual ALL STAR Weekend.

Held in various parts of the country, the event showcases the Miracle League and, we're told, treats the selected players like royalty. This past year, the event was held in St. Louis.

Two players from our Kiwanis Miracle League were able to take their families to the event. They came back all smiles! And here's what each had to say.

**Pictured: William & Nolen are ready to play!**





**Nolen featured on the video board. Way to go, Nolen!**

## **Cardinals Player--Nolen Parkin**

***Submitted by Dad, Jason.***

Last spring Nolen was selected to participate in the National Miracle League All-Star games in St Louis. Our whole family got to tag along and experience everything they had in store for him. Hotel by the Arch and a dinner at the Redbird Club at Busch Stadium, the miracle league athletes getting introduced individually, while outside, each picture flashed up on the scoreboard.

There were also dance parties, player parades, red carpets, swag bags, and an awards party at the St Louis Science Center. He came home smiling and exhausted. We had a blast meeting other athletes from all over the country. Nolen has lots of family in the St Louis area, so his cheering section was 20-strong! Many thanks to them for coming to support him! And thank you to Kiwanis Miracle League of Des Moines for this awesome experience!

**Pictured: Nolen is loving being with former St. Louis Cardinal players! Andy & Alan Benes, pitching teammates and brothers on the Cardinals in the late 1990's and early 2000's.**





**Sales family was ready for a good time.**



**William was entranced with the dinosaur at the St. Louis Museum.**

## **Brewers Player-- William Sales**

***Submitted by Dad, Will.***

The 2025 Miracle League ALL STAR weekend was a blast! William and family were proud to represent our Kiwanis Miracle League. We began at Busch stadium for the Friday festivities. The Cardinals were away, so the players and families had the upper deck to ourselves for dinner and socializing. Saturday was game day!

It was a hot one at the Gateway Region YMCA Miracle League field, but that didn't stop the fun for William's team, the Rangers vs the White Sox. We had a few hours to rest and cool off and then we were off to the St. Louis Science Center. Dinner was made up of local favorite fare, located like a yummy scavenger's hunt throughout all three stories of the building. William and family played and experimented with paleontology, engineering, construction, aerodynamics, video gaming, and more. There was so much cool SWAG—William's favorites were his trophy ring featuring imagery of the St. Louis Arch and his personalized mini-baseball bat. The hotel was right next to Gateway Arch National Park, so we walked over and took in the wonder of the monument before heading back to Des Moines. It was an honor and a truly delightful experience to gather with Miracle

League players and families from across the country. Many thanks, Kiwanis Miracle League.

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## Ballpark Cleanup

Some may wonder what needs to happen when we say it's time to clean up our KML and get ready for spring ball. Some call it general "clean up"; some call it "unwinterizing". Regardless of what it's called, it's a lot of work. Here's evidence: Our facilities manager, Bob Syroka, single handedly bagged SEVENTEEN bags of leaves when we had that beautiful weather a couple weeks ago. Thank you, Bob!

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## Opportunity to Give

We frequently get asked “how can we help?” And we’re so thankful that so many people want to help—volunteering to clean up the ballpark, work in the concession stand, arrange for their high school athletic team to serve as buddies, take pictures, manage various games at the annual Halloween/trophy/pizza party, or in some other way.

Another way to help involves money, but not a lot. Many of you have taken notice of our Kiwanis Memory Garden and spend time looking at the engraved pavers, placed there in memory of loved ones. If you have a friend or family member who you would like to have remembered in this way, please see us for specific questions. The cost is not extravagant:

- \$135 for a 4” x 8” Engraved Brick
- \$260 for an 8” x 8” Engraved Brick
- \$550 for an 8” x 8” Engraved Granite
- \$1050 for an 8” x 8” Engraved Granite

Additionally, many families over the years have suggested that, when a loved one passes away, that memorial money be directed to the Kiwanis Miracle League. These funds can be made for a specific purpose or may be unrestricted.

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## Become a 2026 Team Sponsor

Ever wonder about the vinyl banners that hang on our dugouts and home plate backstop? Those represent individuals, organizations, and companies who want to help make a difference in the lives of kids with special needs, as well as help make our Kiwanis Miracle League a success each year. It's because of our many team sponsors that we are able to allow any child/adult with special needs to play at no cost. That's right, we charge nothing for a child/adult to play on our teams, get a uniform, and participate in various special events like our Halloween/trophy/pizza party. Please spread the word and encourage those you know who might be interested in investing \$500 in our most worthy cause.

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## Concession Volunteers Needed

Our concession stand is a place where players and spectators can purchase some of a ballpark's greatest snacks—hot dogs, hamburgers, pop, drinks, candy, ice cream, popcorn, and, of course, walking tacos. As with any of our efforts to bring the world of baseball to all of our players with special needs, it takes volunteers. And we need volunteers this spring.

If you know of a group of 3 or 4 who might like to take a shift for a couple hours, please let us know. Adults only, please (16 and above). Contact Carol Towner at [cstone625@aol.com](mailto:cstone625@aol.com).

**Pictured: Various members of the Indianola Kiwanis club are frequent volunteers!**







**Board members made some hefty decisions at our November meeting!**

## **Annual Meeting of KML Board of Directors**

It takes a village of dedicated volunteers to run our KML ballpark. Our board of directors is a working board (as opposed to a governance board) making all the decisions relating to our KML ballpark, registering our players and coaches, managing concessions, keeping merchandise stocked, and a whole host of other things too numerous to mention. The following officers were re-elected at our November 18th annual meeting.

Jan Burch, president  
Bob Mitchell, immediate past  
president and treasurer  
Tom Pflanz, vice president  
Bob Syroka, vice president  
Carol Towner, secretary

And the following are 2026 board  
members: Thom Wierenga, Bill Keck,  
Rachel McCann, Jennifer Anderson,  
Tim Askland, Deborah Buse, Jim  
Sanders, Drew Engebrecht, Mike  
Musich, Christy Nelson, and Kerry  
Walter-Ashby.



**We Love to Tell our Story**

From time to time, we get invited to schools, community centers, and various organizations to tell our story, recruit players and buddies, even for fundraising purposes. In November, we had 2 groups of volunteers at the Waukee High Schools' annual volunteer & job fair. Bob Mitchell, Sue Askland, and Jeff Pierce handled the table at Waukee Northwest with Jan Burch and Carol Towner handling Waukee HS. Carol, Jan, and Bob are shown at one of the outreach events.

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## Calendar of Events

- March 10 Eastside Community Night, East HS
  - March 24 No monthly board meeting—enjoy spring break!
  - April 13 Annual Transition Fair, Urbandale HS
  - April 25 Ballpark cleanup (8:30 – 11:00 am)
  - April 28 Monthly board meeting
  - May 2 Ballpark cleanup (8:30 – 11:00 am)
  - May 9 Opening day of 2026 season
  - May 16 Games all day
  - May 23 Games all day
  - May 26 Monthly board meeting
  - May 30 Games all day
  - June 6 Games all day
  - June 13 Games all day
  - June 20 Games all day & Team Pictures
  - June 23 Monthly board meeting
  - June 27 Games all day and End of 2026 Spring Season
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**One of our many 2025 buddy groups-- the Urbandale girls softball team. Thanks! And hope to see many teams and groups with us again this spring.**

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