



The Line Up

[About Us](#) | [Players](#) | [Sponsors/Donors](#) | [Volunteers](#)

December 28, 2016

[Highlights](#) | [Wrap Up](#) | [Outreach](#) | [Volunteers](#) | [Coaches](#) | [Donors/Sponsors](#) | [Calendar](#)

Highlight Reel

Journey of Hope



Journey of Hope, part of The Ability Experience, visited KML in July as part of a 4,000 mile cross-country bike ride to raise awareness for people with mental and physical disabilities. The stop through Des Moines produced smiles on players and riders!

Ankeny Miracle League Home Game



Our Kiwanis Miracle League players hosted Ankeny Miracle League for our "Home" game on September 12, 2016

International Visitors



A group of international visitors returned to Des Moines in September. As part of the International Visitor Leadership Program, representatives from Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia met with local service organizations, administrators and families to learn and share best practices, experiences and build global relationships. Jan Burch, Bob Mitchell and Nadine Kastner presented an overview of our organization and answered questions. The visitors even made time to come to the field on Saturday and Buddy for two afternoon games.

[View More Photos from FALL 2016 >>](#)

Fall Season Wrapup

Handle with Care! New Uniform Care Information

All the players received a new SHIRT this past season! We would like to only order shirts for the new players for the next few years. With that in mind, please remember to wash these shirts inside out to hopefully preserve the lettering and keep them looking great for a few years. For players who have lost their patches, Joyce will have replacement patches in the Spring. You will just have to iron it onto the left sleeve. Regardless, we recommend tacking the patch on the sleeve with a needle and thread in addition to the glue.

The Field Has Been "Put Away" for The Winter!

It is hard to believe 2016 is almost over! We had a great season again this year. With 30 new registrations, we ended up with 245 players!

The Pizza-Trophy Party Was Great!



On October 17th, we officially ended our 17th Season of KML. 540 people attended our End-of-the-Year Pizza Party at HOPE Church. All the Players, as well as their family members, were able to view the 2016 DVD. Trophies were handed out by each of the Coaches. (If you were unable to attend, please contact your coach to receive your trophy.) 2016 DVD's will be available for \$5 at our spring opener. This year's party was funded by a contribution from H&R Block's Johnston Office. Bob Egr, USSSA/Central Iowa Sports, contributed ALL of our 2016 trophies and plaques. THANK YOU, BOB and H&R BLOCK!

2017 Spring Opener Date Set!

Our Spring/Summer Season will begin on May 6th. After the new year, you will be hearing from Joyce Byrne regarding the start of Registrations and the dates for our

Registration/Clinics. Until then wishing all a happy and healthy holidays!

Halloween at The Field - Scarry Good Fun!



It seemed too perfect an idea not to do it. A night game in the brisk, autumn air? We could use the field lights for their intended purpose: to light the field for a game! Mix in some howling Halloween fun and players in costume, and this event was practically a foregone conclusion.

It may have taken eight seasons to make it happen, but it was worth the wait! It was a seasonably chilly evening, in contrast to the rest of this unseasonably warm fall season. But nobody complained. Our amazing field lights lit the field so brightly that it was easy to pretend that the summer sun was still shining down on us. That, and we had hot chocolate at the concession stand.

The field was adorned with plenty of Halloween décor. Ghosts and witches flew from the fences. Lights hung from the pavilion. Obligatory pumpkins and hay bales were on hand. And the silvery moon hung overhead. (Cue far away wolf howl sound effect. Chilling, right?)

With an anticipated crowd of 96 players (might as well call it 100), we knew we couldn't handle a baseball game that size. Nobody would want to wait through 50 batters per team. How unfair would it be to the last batter of the game? So this event was designed to be somewhat different from our typical "All-Star" night games.

Rather than a traditional game of baseball, we split our magnificent facilities into three spooky stations. On the infield we had a home run derby. Players got up to bat, cranked out a hit, and trick-or-treated their way around the bases, picking up a special Halloween surprise at first, second, third and home. The outfield hosted two mini-activities; a bean-bag toss and a relay race. Of course, players picked up a few more treats. Finally, at

the pavilion, we ran a cake walk style costume parade with creepy tunes and special photo opportunities with local Iowa League of Heroes guests, Clark Kent and The Dark Knight. And, you guessed it, the final station offered more treats to cram into the players' special Miracle League Trick-or-Treat bags.

The night was a success. Players got to pack in just a little more Miracle League fun before shutting down the field for the year. But they also got to take part in a completely unique Halloween celebration. We owe special thanks to our volunteers for serving in essential roles to make the event move like clockwork. Prosecutors and support staff from the Polk County Attorney's Office provided the bulk of our help. We also had support of some representatives of the Marion and Clarke County offices of the Iowa Department of Human Services and a few outstanding high school students for good measure.

A final consideration, dear reader. I did not get to bore you to tears with the detailed minutia of all the planning that went into our first ("first?" is this to be an annual shindig?) Halloween Event, but there is one fact that should be highlighted here in full appreciation of this celebration. The Halloween Event was held a mere five days after our rip-roaring end of the year Pizza and Trophy Party. Behind the scenes, that means that our core group of tireless Miracle League organizers had to dedicate their time and energy to numerous trips shopping for treats and decorations, moving carloads of supplies back and forth, and setting up and breaking down for two large events in one week. Closing the field down had to be delayed past our usual annual schedule. And all to achieve that one continuous mission: to put a smile on the face of a child.

Through baseball.

And a bag full of Halloween treats.

Congratulations! Wilson Named 2016 Buddy of the Year

Our Kiwanis Miracle League/AFLAC Buddy Program Sponsor has declared Cliff Wilson our 2016 AFLAC Buddy of the Year! Congratulations Cliff!

[View More Photos from FALL 2016 >>](#)

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Community Outreach

Informational Events

Nadine Kastner and Ian represented Kiwanis Miracle League at 2 informational events this fall, Family & Educator Partnership Resource Fair at the Science Center of Iowa and the Inclusive Ministry Conference at Hope Lutheran Church. They shared information about our league and volunteer opportunities.

If you know of an event or opportunity to promote our league, please contact Nadine

Volunteer Corner

Congratulations to Our AFLAC Buddy Of The Year – Cliff Wilson; AND AFLAC Buddy Group Of The Year – SE Polk Girls Softball Team!

It takes over 2000 volunteers to pull off our Spring and Fall seasons each year. That's a lot of dedication! Check our website for 2017 volunteer opportunities and come join the fun!

***** Needed for our 2017 Seasons *****

New Coaches needed for Youth League and New Coaches needed for 2017 Adult League. Go to our website to find out more. www.kiwanismiracleleague.org



Discovering Passion & Paying It Forward, By Nicole Priest

For as long as I can remember the only job I ever pictured myself having was being a teacher. When I was younger, I played school with all of my stuffed animals and of course I was always the teacher. I didn't really know what kind of teacher I was meant to be until my first year of college. My advisor asked me to think back on experiences I had with children that really impacted and stuck with me. I thought back to my high school days of being in Key Club and some of the volunteer experiences we did. Two experiences came to mind: Special Olympics and the Kiwanis Miracle League. I could remember being a buddy at the Miracle League and seeing the joy on the players' faces as they got the chance to participate and run the bases. As I volunteered, I couldn't help but smile the whole time. There was so much joy watching these kids get to be kids and having the opportunity to be a part of the team. So as I sat with my advisor looking back on my experiences I decided to study special education. So, here I am today as a special education teacher at Moore Elementary in Des Moines. I love going to work every day and seeing the growth in my students. Here I am today also as a member of the Ankeny Kiwanis continuing to volunteer at the Miracle League in both Ankeny and Des Moines. I feel so thankful for those volunteer experiences in high school which helped me discover my passion and made me who I am today.



Coaches Corner

Some Favorite Moments from White Sox Coach Schuman!



Hello all! My name is Kyle Schuman and I am the head coach of the White Sox. I have coached the White Sox since the very beginning back in 2008 and loved every game since then. I am so excited to share a few of my favorite moments and give you a little insight into myself and my family in the latest newsletter.

I have managed team members at Wells Fargo for many years and one thing I always want to challenge them with is to find something within your community you can be involved in and passionate about. For me I have two true passions. One is sports. My wife doesn't understand it but I have been a sports nut since day 1 of life and can spend all day playing or watching those sports that interest me. My other love is being involved with kids. I have just always been able to connect easily with kids and have always seemed to get that connection in return.

I found this opportunity in the winter of 2007 when I attended the local Iowa Cubs fan fest and saw a table set up that had information on a new baseball park that was being built for kids who are not able to play regular little league for whatever reason it may be. The Kiwanis Miracle League was looking for volunteers and I didn't think twice. To that point I had struggled to find something that I really felt excited to be a part of within the community. Coaching the White Sox in the Kiwanis Miracle League has been everything I had hoped it would be. As a lifelong Cubs fan, for me to continually put on a White Sox jersey it also definitely takes an extremely good reason and cause. Our family involvement has grown as my wife Angie is now an assistant coach and my kids (8 and 5 years old) love going to the park each Saturday for the games (popcorn and walking tacos) and hanging out in the dugout with the players.

I could give you a favorite moment from every Saturday but did want to share a few good ones from my 8 years.

This first one happened to come from one of the parents. A new player was added to our roster and they had driven over an hour and half to be able to participate in the Miracle League as there was nothing close to them that was similar. As you may know, each kid is issued a free jersey and hat but these parents were not aware of that upon arriving so the Dad and child proceeded to head to the restroom to change. The child came right back out of the restroom, proud as could be with his new jersey on, but it was a good 10 minutes before we saw his Dad. This was a 7 year old boy who had not been able to be a part of any organized sport due to some learning struggles. His Dad had never seen his son in a jersey, playing for an organized team before and had just hit him all at once and he had lost it with emotion. It took him almost 10 minutes to get his composure back. The seemingly little things a lot of people take for granted, just like seeing our kids put on a jersey and be part of a team, can mean so much to our kids and parents. This happened in just our second season and was a moment that I knew exactly how special this league is and how big of an impact it has on those involved and how needed it was. The moment still gets to me even writing this out years later.

I will be selfish with my second moment as it did not happen at the ballpark. My oldest daughter is now 8 years old and has come to the games with us since she was only 4 months old. She has grown up and befriended the kids on our team and in the league and never thought twice about it and has not known any different. I had taken that for granted and not even thought about it until one day when I was picking her up for school just last year. A girl who uses braces on both her arms to get around had dropped her school bag and all its contents had spilled everywhere.

All of the other kids at the time had lined up to head outside to play and a huge swarm of 6 and 7 year olds ran right by her itching to get outside as what 6 or 7 year old doesn't want to be the first one outside on a nice day? As the dust cleared and as I tried to track my daughter down in the swarm I looked down the hall to see her (by herself) picking up all of those items, zipping up the girls bag and making sure it got put on her back alright as she was leaving. That was one of those spots where I was the Dad needing to go the restroom for 10 minutes to compose himself. I couldn't help but think Miracle League was to thank for my daughter not seeing this girl for the braces and physical differences she may have but to see her as any other kid who just had dropped her stuff and needed some help...which is the absolute truth.

Our kids and families are so special and I could go through so many moments- Jordan hitting it out of the park or watching Tristen WALK around the bases and on and on as I tear up/smile even thinking about it. My hope for everyone is that they find something within their community that means as much to them as Miracle League does to our family. A passion where you don't look at it as an "ordinary" volunteer activity but rather as something that you wake up in the morning and are truly excited to be a part of. I know I have found mine.

Donor News

Team Sponsorships for 2017 Are Available Starting January 1st



Ever wanted to own your own baseball team? Now you can...become a 2017 Team Sponsor! Your contribution of \$500 will go a long way in helping the Kiwanis Miracle League continue to be available to all of our players free of charge. You or your company will get a vinyl banner that will hang on our dugouts throughout the 2017 seasons. You'll be listed on our web site, social media and in the many brochures we make available throughout the year. But best of all, you'll be helping our players realize their dreams of playing baseball on a real team and on a real field! Contact Jan Burch, board president, for more information at 515.457.7691 or burchhr@aol.com.

KML Receives Proceeds from Local Events



Vision Financial Group presented Kiwanis Miracle League proceeds from its June golf tournament on 8/27. Total proceeds were shared by 3 central Iowa leagues; KML, Ankeny ML, and the new Urbandale ML.



KML was presented again this year with proceeds from the Whiffit Annual Tournament. A big thanks to former board member and coach Doug Vinsand for his many years of support!

Year-End Giving Opportunities



Do you shop online at Amazon.com? Whether you're a casual or frequent Amazon shopper, your purchases can help the Kiwanis Miracle League!

The next time you hop online at Amazon.com, simply enroll in AmazonSmile and name the MIRACLE LEAGUE OF DES MOINES KIWANIS as your charity of choice. Why? Because .05% of your purchases will be donated to the Kiwanis Miracle League! First time shoppers should go to <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/26-11079> to set up your account naming the KML as your charity. Frequent long-time shoppers can designate just as easily. It's a one-time thing—and will benefit Des Moines' favorite ball park! Thanks!

Save on Your Taxes While Helping The Kiwanis Miracle League

The *Kiwanis Miracle League* Board has established an *Endow Iowa Fund* with the *Greater Des Moines Community Foundation*. This is an exciting new opportunity for our friends and families to help us secure the financial future for the league and, at the same time, save big dollars on their income taxes.

Donors who give to an Endow Iowa Fund not only can deduct the gift on their federal income tax return, but can get credit against their state income taxes in the amount of 25% of their gift. Instead of a state tax deduction, which might result in a tax savings up to 8%, donors get a credit of 25% - regardless of whether they itemize deductions or not! Here's an example:

	\$1,000 Gift to <i>Miracle League</i>	vs	\$1,000 Gift to <i>Endow Iowa Fund</i>
Federal tax savings	\$ 280		\$ 280
State tax savings	\$ 50		\$ 250
Net cost of gift	\$ 670		\$ 470

*Assumes 28% tax bracket for federal and 5% tax bracket for state.

Donations to an *Endow Iowa Fund* must be made to the *Greater Des Moines Community Foundation* for the benefit of the *Miracle League of Des Moines Kiwanis Endow Iowa Fund*. Principal amounts donated to the fund are held and managed by the community foundation, and the *Kiwanis Miracle League* can draw as much as 5% from the fund annually to use in whatever way best benefits the league.

So now our donors have choices – they can make donations directly to the *Kiwanis Miracle League* for use in covering operating expenses and capital improvements – and deduct those gifts as charitable deductions on their state and federal tax returns, or they can contribute to the *Greater Des Moines Community Foundation* for the *Miracle League's Endow Iowa Fund*, and get a 25% tax credit against their state income taxes, in addition to their usual federal charitable deduction.

State tax credits are allocated to donors on a first come, first served basis annually – until the total amount of credits allowed by the state are used up. This year \$6 million in tax credits are available!

Help the *Miracle League* continue to offer a special place for special needs children enjoy playing baseball on a team – donate to the *Miracle League* or to the *Miracle League's Endow Iowa Fund*. Talk to your tax advisor about how these choices might affect your personal tax situation.

Our KML Calendar of Events

January 1	Happy New Year!
January 19	KML Board Meeting, 7:30 AM, Hamilton's on Westown Parkway
March 4	Spring Registration Clinic & Coaches Meeting
April 1	Spring Registration Clinic & Coaches Meeting (no fooling!)
April 19	KML Board Meeting, 7:30 AM, Hamilton's on Westown Parkway
May 6	2017 SPRING SEASON OPENER

Keep up with us via

our website: www.kiwanismiracleleague.org

Twitter: [@kiwanismiracle](https://twitter.com/kiwanismiracle)

Our Facebook page: Facebook.com/kiwanismiracleleague

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Kiwanis



Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute
Class of 2007-2008

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: Nadine Kastner, nadine.kastner@meredith.com, Carol Towner, cstone625@aol.com or Jan Burch, Jan Burch & Associates, Burchhr@aol.com.

[View this email in your browser.](#)

Published by **WinM@il**