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# The Lineup



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Friday, Jan. 23, 2015

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It's almost time for baseball!

Opening Day is planned for May 9, 2015.

Put it on your calendars and come ready to *Play Ball!*

## Players' Corner



## 2014 Spring & Fall Seasons Recap

Well it is hard to believe that the Fall Season ended only a few months ago, seems like just yesterday! The weather person was quite good to us for all of 2014! While we had a couple of postponements to a later game, we did not end up canceling a whole day! Our

attendance this past seasons was fantastic! Football played a part in the Fall – but we were always able to field two teams. We had 245 players registered and THANKS to all who participated.

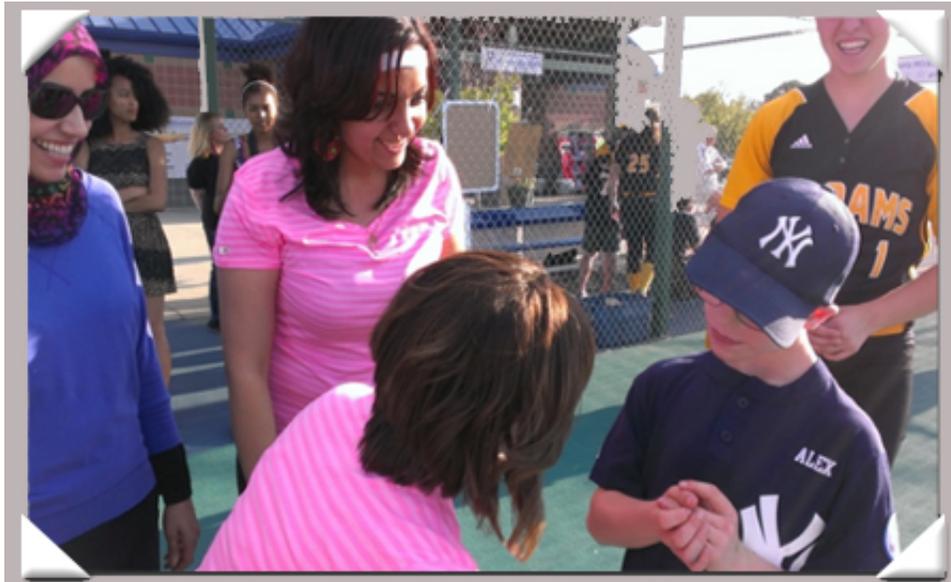
If you have any suggestions where we can improve our communications or coaching please let us know! We are always trying to be better! See you soon in 2015!



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### **International Visitors "Strike Up" New Relationships at the Ballpark**

May 25th was an extra special evening as we hosted eight international visitors from the United Arab Republic. The visitors were leaders in serving children with special needs in their home countries of Yemen, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Egypt. They were invited to Des Moines as part of our International Visitor Leadership Program, so they could meet with local teachers, administrators and families to learn and share best practices, experiences and build global relationships. Since they don't have anything like a Miracle League in their countries, we were a special place for them. And we showed them how much fun playing in the Kiwanis Miracle League is, with each of them playing right along with us! Nearly 150 visitors enjoyed a picnic and two games. Many thanks to Shottenkirk Chevrolet for providing the great food. It was a magical evening and one that is sure to be long-remembered by our international visitors.



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### Iowa Barnstormers & Kiwanis Miracle League Team Up for a Night of Baseball Fun!

June 25th was Iowa Barnstormers Night at Kiwanis Miracle League of Des Moines. Members of the Iowa Barnstormers arena football team paired up with players of the Miracle League for a memorable night of baseball fun. A big thank you to the Barnstormer organization for the continuing support of our league!



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### 2014 Pizza & Trophy Party

Our year-end party was a great success! We had over 500 people who had reserved a spot,

however less than 400 enjoyed the day! We had comments from Jan Burch, KML president, presentation of plaques to Coaches, viewing of our 2014 video of all players batting, as well as TROPHIES for all players! AND of course the pizza and trimmings were excellent again this year, including cookies galore!



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### Looking ahead to the 2015 Spring Season

The Players Committee has announced Opening Day is May 9, 2015. While that is only four months away, we are also planning Registration Clinics for March 7, and April 11 to make the time go faster for the players! These Clinics will be held back at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, more room and places for the parents to register their player and watch 'practice'! The directions and times will be sent out in the New Year. We also are working on a new software package for 2015 Registrations, to provide a more user-friendly experience! Look for more information on this coming soon!

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## Coaches' Corner

### Coaching in the Miracle League, by Kevin Shetler

When I was first asked to be a Coach for the Kiwanis Miracle League, I thought nothing of it and quickly volunteered. I had coached young children before and so I thought myself well qualified, but nothing truly prepared me for the experience I now share as a Coach in the Miracle League.

Coaching physically and mentally challenged kids in the Miracle league has changed my life in more ways than I ever could have imagined. The beauty of the Miracle League is that dreams do come true the minute you step onto the rubberized field, dreams for all the coaches, parents and especially the energized players.

I coach 20 boys and girls that make up the Kiwanis Miracle League Chicago Cubs. The great thing about these little Cubs is that every time they come up to bat, they get a hit and every player gets to score a run. The score always ends in a tie. Some kids are still finding it amazing we consistently come back in that last inning and tie the score. Only if the big league Cubs, could figure that one out!



Our motto is, "every child is a winner" and that is a message we drive home no matter how minor or major the disability, or the challenge that must be overcome. Each child gets to steal that moment of fame and the look on their faces tells the whole story. That look can send you to tears in a heartbeat. They are so excited to be basking in the glory of all that baseball has to offer and we make sure we provide all of the true play-by-play color.

We've perfected some special signals for both our 1st and 3rd base coaches, unique only to our team! Sometime the steal sign is on and we have to engage the wheelchair afterburners and other times we will call for a bunt at home plate to advance the runners from 1st to 2nd. In other unforgettable moments we have actually had players call out where they are going to hit the ball. Clearly it is about that special hour on the field. That is when these kids and their parents get to live in a very special moment in time, as the Miracle League becomes their "Field of Dreams".

Not only has this experience changed my life, it has changed the lives of my two teenage

daughters who help volunteer as "Angels in the Outfield." Simply put, coaching the Miracle Leaguers puts everything in perspective. Sometimes when I've had a hard day at work and start to complain a little, I think of my team and the challenges they endure on a daily basis. They are always "all smiles" they are more of an inspiration to me more than they will ever know. I also feel honored to be their coach and I truly thank their parents for letting me part of their lives. Giving parents that 1 hour break so they can sit in the stands to watch their child hit a ball and run or be pushed in their wheelchair down the first base line, is awesome! You see the beauty of the Miracle League is that when you are there and the minute the kids walk onto that field, all of life's challenges evaporate in an instant.

I remember a time when one of my older players got up to bat and took a big swing and bang, just like that, the first home run was recorded at the Miracle League ballpark. The look on that young man's face was one of incredible accomplishment and satisfaction. Those are the game changers in life, these are truly the moments that will stick with you forever.

So, if you truly want to make a difference in a young child's life then please give some serious consideration to volunteering or coaching in the Miracle League. You see, like me, you might think, I can coach, but then before you know it the kids are coaching and teaching you positive life lessons and you're now your eagerly awaiting the start of the next Miracle League season.

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## Volunteers' Corner

**BUDDIES NEEDED:** If you would like to volunteer to be a buddy, or have a group that would like to come - just go to our web site, [www.kiwanismiracleleague.org](http://www.kiwanismiracleleague.org), and click on Volunteers to register with our online provider, volunteerspot.com. If you are a group coordinator or just have questions about volunteering, contact Jan Burch, our volunteer chair, at 457-7691 or [burchhr@aol.com](mailto:burchhr@aol.com).

**CLEAN UP CREW:** Volunteers will also be needed to help get the ball park ready for the season. We'll be cleaning, mulching, weeding, sweeping, and everything it takes to get the site in tiptop shape for the 2015 Spring Season. Want to help? Join us from 9 am - noon for an hour or two on Saturday, April 25 and Saturday, May 2.

Sign up on our website:

Go to [www.kiwanismiracleleague.org](http://www.kiwanismiracleleague.org) and click the "Volunteers" button.

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## Community Outreach



### Community Outreach Events Promoting League Awareness and Volunteer Opportunities

This past year we participated in the following community forums to promote the Kiwanis Miracle League at Principal Park.

- Connecting Hearts 2014
- Des Moines Public Schools Community Resource Fair
- Merrill Middle School Volunteer Forum
- City of Des Moines Combined Charities Chili Cook-off
- Walnut Hills (Waukee) Elementary 3rd Grade Volunteer Day

If you know of an event or opportunity to promote our league, please contact Nadine Kastner at 515-360-0043 or [Nadine.kastner@meredith.com](mailto:Nadine.kastner@meredith.com).

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## Board Corner

Year-end 2014 brought several changes to the make-up of our KML Board of Directors. We were saddened to accept the resignation of long-time member, Ron Peterson. Ron is a long-time member of the West Des Moines Kiwanis Club and served since we began as a steering committee in 2007. He also chaired our risk management and merchandise committees. His was the friendly face sitting behind the merchandise table on game days.

We welcome two new board members—Doug Vinsand and Mike Schneider. Doug is employed in sales at DeeZee Manufacturing, is married to Jenna, and is an assistant coach for the Yankees. Mike is the technology director at Lutheran Church of Hope, married to Dawn, and father of Cory, player on the Cubs team. Both bring new thoughts and ideas to the Kiwanis Miracle League. Thanks for agreeing to serve, Doug and Mike!

**Here are our 2015 board members:**

Jan Burch, President, Des Moines & Grimes Kiwanis  
Joyce Byrne, Vice president, Northwest Kiwanis  
Tom Pflanz, Vice president, Des Moines Kiwanis  
Carol Stone, Secretary, Des Moines Kiwanis  
Bob Mitchell, Treasurer & Immediate Past President, Des Moines & Ankeny Kiwanis  
Nick Foster, Assistant Treasurer & Asst. Coach, Mets  
Becky Gruening, Des Moines Kiwanis  
Bill Keck, Des Moines Kiwanis  
Daryl Peitersen, West Des Moines Kiwanis  
Doug Vinsand, Yankees Asst. Coach  
Kent Babcock, Urbandale Kiwanis & Dodgers Asst. Coach  
Kerry Walter-Ashby, Ankeny Kiwanis  
Kevin Shetler, Des Moines Kiwanis & Cubs Coach  
Mike Musich, Urbandale & Grimes Kiwanis  
Mike Schneider, player dad (Cory, Cubs)  
Nadine Kastner, player mom (Ian, Mets)  
Rob Baldus, Twins Coach & player dad (Isaac)  
Will Sales, Brewers Coach & player dad (William)

**Ex Officio/non-voting members:**

Bob Dunaway, Kiwanis Div 13 Lt. Governor & Urbandale Kiwanis  
Fred Wessendorf, Kiwanis Div 16 Lt. Governor & Golden K Kiwanis

Contact information for each of our board members along with their committee assignments is listed on our web site. Feel free to contact any of us at any time.

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## **Donor News & Opportunities**



### Kiwanis Miracle League at Principal Park receives \$10,000 from Chicken of the Sea

At the Iowa Cubs game on May 15, Chicken of the Sea presented the Kiwanis Miracle League with a check for \$10,000. The donation was part of the Chicken of the Sea's "Great American Gratitude Tour." In celebration of their 100th anniversary, Chicken of the Sea is touring the country to give back to local organizations and individuals that are doing great work in their communities. Chicken of the Sea Vice President of Marketing – and Iowa native, Christie Fleming, was on hand to present the award. Board members and players from the Kiwanis Miracle League were on hand to receive it and stay for a fun evening of Iowa Cubs baseball!

### Do you shop online at Amazon.com?

If you do, you can help the Kiwanis Miracle League. 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. Thanks!



### NEW DONOR OPTION:

We're so grateful to everyone who has supported the Kiwanis Miracle League over these first years – making it possible for us to offer a great experience to our players, families, and volunteers. Your donations have made it possible for us to operate the league at no charge to our players while maintaining and improving the facilities, providing uniforms and equipment, and celebration trophy parties at season end.

Now our generous donors will have a new option - the newly established Miracle League of

Des Moines Kiwanis Endow Iowa Fund, operated out of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines. This fund will ensure our future for the long term, and donors can enjoy extra tax benefits.

Of course, we are still happy to receive cash donations for our operating funds, capital improvements, and for purchase of pavers to be placed on the walk of honor at the field.

Watch for more information to come this spring – and feel free to ask our Board members about all our options if you are interested.

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## Calendar

February 19	KML Board of Directors Meeting
March 7	1st of two Player Registration Clinics, Westminster Presbyterian Church
April 11	2nd of two Player Registration Clinics, Westminster Presbyterian Church
April 16	KML Board of Directors Meeting
April 25	Spring Cleanup Day 9 - noon
May 2	Spring Cleanup Day 9 - noon
May 9	2015 Opening Day

Keep up with us via

our website: [www.kiwanismiracleleague.org](http://www.kiwanismiracleleague.org)

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

Our Facebook page: [Facebook.com/kiwanismiracleleague](https://www.facebook.com/kiwanismiracleleague)

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**Kiwanis**



Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute  
Class of 2007-2008

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