



. . . The Friends of Baseball Newsletter. . .

Vol. 1, No. 3

December 7, 2006

Dear “Friends of Baseball”

With the first year since our launch now complete, our Board of Trustees and I would like to thank you for your participation in our exciting evolution. We have awarded eleven grants, and are both pleased and excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. Our collective goal is to double this number in the coming year! As I review our first year, two underlying thoughts come to mind.

Our greatest challenge is in getting the word out regarding the funding available to the youth baseball teams and organizations in greatest need. These teams may be smaller organizations without all the resources available to the more established teams in our region. While it certainly takes *human* resources to plan the season months in advance, these individuals may not have the time or inclination to truly believe that they, too, can share in and participate in our vision. Please continue to nominate those teams that potentially meet our grant requirements. Please also keep in mind we understand that these teams are not professional “grant writers;” neither are we professional “grant readers!” There have actually been several occasions where we have assisted teams in writing their grant requests.

Secondly, I have been truly amazed and heartened by the quality and kindness of individuals I have found in “the baseball community.” I have met personally with dozens of you. In each and every case, there is what I would describe as purity of the soul. Baseball runs deep into the hearts and gut of those I meet, and seems to establish a higher purpose and wonderful balance to their lives. I think all of you know what I am talking about; there is nothing in life more pure than youth baseball. I have met too many individuals to count who, year after year, donate hundreds of hours to youth baseball or softball and, even now, on this day in December, can hardly wait for the season to begin. Thanks to all of you for your wonderful gift of “self.” On behalf of the Trustees, we collectively tip our hats.

Announces Four Grant Recipients

Earlier this month our Trustees announced four new grantees. We are very excited and proud of these organizations, and hope you will check out our website for greater details of each grant announcement. The organizations recently announced include: **Milwaukie Junior Baseball, Gresham High School and local youth baseball, McKay High School**

and Canby Wildcat Softball. Congratulations to these wonderful local and deserving organizations.

Portland Beavers and San Diego Padres Lend a Hand to FOB

In a recent meeting with the Pacific Coast League's Portland Beavers, a \$1000 check was presented to FOB to help expand our vision. These funds were granted to our organization by both the Beavers and their major league affiliate, the San Diego Padres. We are incredibly thankful for this commitment and their confidence in the work of FOB. As is true with all donations, 100% of the funds will find their way to youth baseball in our community. This would seem to be just the start of a strong working relationship between our three organizations. Promotional options are in full discussion with many possibilities on the table. Please watch our website and future editions of this letter as we finalize plans for the coming season.

The Grant That Almost Got Away. . .

A number of months ago Chad Marsh, a board member from Gladstone Junior Baseball, contacted us regarding a grant for an equipment storage facility for their league. As we discussed his plan and budget, he referenced that while he had partially covered the cost through fundraising, donations and volunteers, the organization was still running short. We began to discuss specifics of what he was short on (concrete being significant), but just one of the final hurdles. I was able to share with Chad a number of ideas and contacts that might facilitate the completion of his project. Chad ran with it, big time! Not only did he secure a donation for the concrete, but also a contractor to volunteer his time to complete the project. Soon, the balance of his project's needs appeared. Recently, his grant request for this project was withdrawn. I believe this speaks to the initiative of Chad, his board and the type of consulting support that Friends of Baseball can provide in maximizing the reach of our limited funds. Often it can be simply a matter of getting the word out relating to the need at hand and then approaching the resources that meet that need. The answer, more often than not, is "you bet."

Oregon Sports Authority "Rocks"

Some of you may not know how vitally important the Oregon Sports Authority is to Friends of Baseball. In the formative organizational stage of FOB Drew Mahalic, CEO, and the board of OSA, had the courage and vision to partner with our inspiration. OSA provided their own foundation as the vehicle to meet the federal requirements in administrating FOB's funding endowment. Additionally, their board oversees our granting process and has acted as advisors. This has been of huge assistance to our own Trustees, allowing us to focus our efforts on youth baseball and softball instead of dealing with all of the regulatory requirements. Thank You, Thank You, Oregon Sports Authority.

In fact, FOB was contacted directly by a league in Springfield, Oregon. I explained that, unfortunately, their league was located outside of our granting region. I suggested they contact OSA, as they are able to provide grants throughout the state of Oregon to qualified organizations. It was recently announced that OSA has granted this organization \$3,500 for playing field development within its community. I told you OSA rocks!

"I would like to help Youth Baseball"

While you are checking out our new grantees on friendsofbaseball.org, please also take a peek at our new link at the top using the title and link noted above. We have been contacted

by enthusiastic parties who would like to find a way to assist youth baseball, possibly through our organization. This new section might just spark an idea. Having spent the baseball season mingling and working with kids and volunteers, I cannot remember a more rewarding summer.

One simple way to help us get the word out is to add a link from a website over which you may have at least “some” influence. We would be happy to send you a PDF file of our new logo that could be used as a link to our site. Simply send us an email with your request. While you are at it, consider adding Oregon Sports Authority at oregonsports.org.

Thanks to Gregg!

Many of you knew Gregg Ireland, the founder of Metro Baseball Academy. Gregg passed away very unexpectedly this past week while working in his office. This is often where you could find Gregg, sometimes seven days a week. Gregg was not only devoted to youth baseball, but did something about it by teaching fundamentals and inspiration to hundreds of kids over the years through Junior Baseball of Oregon and his academy. While I only met with Gregg once, I was instantly taken by the fact he catered to the average player; his fee schedule was amazingly affordable and, for those who might not otherwise be able to attend, he seemed to always find a way. A recent note to me from a parent of an autistic child for whom Gregg and “his team” provided life changing confidence and inspiration sums up what made Gregg so special: “It is a huge loss to the baseball community, but especially to the kids. Gregg was a very modest man - I don’t expect that he would acknowledge the difference he made. Fortunately, Gregg’s son Kelly’s heart is as big as Gregg’s. Kelly has the ability to take his dad’s vision, run with it, and then some.” This is also the Gregg I knew. Please let everyone know that the legacy of Metro Baseball Academy is in strong hands, and please continue to support Kelly, the academy, and its wonderful coaches. His website can be found at metrobaseball.net

One Last Favor. . . Promise!

I have attached a word document that briefly shares the vision and objectives of FOB. This was developed from a request for a handout for individuals and organizations to give directly to interested parties, or at league or coaches’ conferences. This is not a copyrighted document, so please print out a few that you might find a good home for or, come to think of it, print as many as you want.

On behalf of our Trustees I would like to wish you all a very happy holiday season. Yes, we do, indeed, have a lot to be thankful for. Talk to you next year. . .

Warm Regards,

Keenan

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to others who might be interested!

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newsletter-unsubscribe@friendsofbaseball.org**

“A life is not important except in the impact it makes on other lives. . .” Jackie Robinson

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