



League of Dreams provides opportunity to teach kids baseball

Community: Program introduces game to many young players



Work continues on a baseball diamond at Jones Park in 2010. A soccer field once stood where this diamond was eventually built as part of the Al Smith League of Dreams. (Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette)

Peter Brooks, community contributor

Jul 30, 2016 at 12:00 pm | [Print View](#)

Editor's note: Peter Brooks is a junior journalism student at Mount Mercy University.

CEDAR RAPIDS — When the flood of 2010 destroyed several youth baseball fields, former Cedar Rapids Kernels general manager Jack Roeder wanted them rebuilt.

He turned to the Baseball Tomorrow Fund, received a grant and did just that.

The intent was to create a new youth baseball field and remodel an existing high school size field to a youth field. The other goal was to develop a little league program for second- and third-grade kids living in the flood impacted areas on the west side of town. The program evolved to other areas within the Cedar Rapids community and became known as the Al Smith League of Dreams. Smith was a longtime Kernels board member.

The league is free and consists of 125 kids who are playing for their respective school. But, league coordinator Marcia Moran said, they don't turn any children away.

"We offer it to several schools," she said. "If only one kid signs up (from a particular school), we put them with another team. We have a child playing from Harrison on the Van Buren and Cleveland team."

The idea of the League of Dreams was to introduce kids to the game of baseball who might not otherwise get a chance. It is non-competitive and preaches fundamentals, sportsmanship and the importance of having an active lifestyle.

Josh Reed has a son in the league who likely wouldn't be playing baseball without the program.

"I'm happy we are involved," Reed said. "It's got him interested in baseball and (he) wants to play catch at home."

Each team played a six-game schedule that ended in June. Schools on the west side played at Jones Park while east side schools played at Coe College's softball field.

An all-star game was held June 30 at Veterans Memorial Stadium, which was open to all players. They got to play in right field and saw their names displayed on the Jumbo-Tron. All the spectators were treated to free food and a drink.

Give us feedback

Have you found an error or omission in our reporting? Tell us [here](#).

Do you have a story idea we should look into? Tell us [here](#).

You Might Also Like



Enter Your Name, Wait 14 Seconds, Brace Yourself

TruthFinder



4 Ways Veterans Can Improve Their Credit Scores

Bankrate



If You Set Foot Near This Remote Island, You're Dead.

Mental Flare - The Most Entertaining

Articles On The Web



10 Beautiful Beaches (You Will Never Guess Where!)

Kind Of Viral



White House Triggers Stock Market Collapse

The Sovereign Investor



What Does Your German Last Name Mean? 4 Possibilities

Ancestry

More From the Gazette

- **Zach Johnson off to rough start at PGA** (The Gazette)
- **Obama to make final push on Asia trade deal** (The Gazette)
- **Judge in the toughest race of her life** (The Gazette)
- **Police: School bus worker admits sex with 12-year-old** (The Gazette)
- **Midwest business conditions decline in July** (The Gazette)
- **Thousands greet Trump in Cedar Rapids** (The Gazette)

From Around the Web

- **Trump's IQ Will Shock You** (Find · Explore · Share · Trending Topics and Images)
- **The Worst Crimes Ever Committed By An Athlete In History. Jason Kidd's Was The Worst** (Sports Chew)
- **Looking to Travel in the US? Here Are the Most Affordable Destinations [Slideshow]** (Forbes)
- **After Months Of Research, This Is Our #1 Choice Of Men's Underwear** (Expert Underwear Reviews)
- **The 25 Biggest Homes For Sale In America In 2016** (Forbes)
- **18 Most Hilariously Embarrassing Photos In The History Of The Internet** (LifeDaily)

Recommended by