



LITTLE LEAGUE®
BASEBALL
AND
SOFTBALL

YEAR
IN
REVIEW



2017-18





LITTLE LEAGUE® INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

During the Fiscal Year 2017-18

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LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL®, INCORPORATED

is a nonprofit organization dedicated

“To promote, develop, supervise, and voluntarily assist in all lawful ways the interests of those who will participate.”

Little League® was founded in 1939; incorporated January 8, 1950, and was granted Federal Incorporation July 16, 1964, by unanimous Act of the Senate and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson as Public Law 88-378, 88th Congress H.R. 9234, and amended December 26, 1974 Public Law 93-551, 93rd Congress, H.R. 8864.

Little League is the largest organized youth sports program in the world. In Fiscal Year 2016-17, nearly 2.4 million youth ages 4 to 16 in more than 80 countries and territorial possessions participate in the divisions of Little League Baseball and Softball.

“The Board of Directors shall be the governing board of the corporation and shall be responsible for the general policies and program of the corporation.”

Public Law 88-378
88th Congress, H.R. 9234 Sec. 7(c)

LITTLE LEAGUE® INTERNATIONAL



HUGH E. TANNER

Little League International Board of Directors Chairman



Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Eight decades ago, Carl Stotz was exploring the idea of changing the game of baseball to make it more fun for his nephews and their friends. Mr. Stotz was asking the questions of what rules should change? What is the best field size change? How can more kids have access to this great game? Now, after 79 Little League® seasons, we are asking many of those same questions as Little League International's commitment to providing all children with a meaningful and fun opportunity to play baseball and softball remains steadfast.

The updates found throughout this report demonstrate that we are closing another successful year for Little League International. In 2018, 248 new communities joined our incredible program. We have provided necessary, new online resources through the relaunch of LittleLeague.org and the expansion of the Little League Data Center. We have connected with millions through our digital media efforts and the expansion of our International Tournament coverage on ESPN, with 231 games broadcast, including nearly 100 more Little League Softball® games.

While proud of these accomplishments, we recognize the challenges ahead. Today, there are more and more children specializing in one sport and no longer sampling many. Young families face greater demands on time and financial resources. The birth rate continues to decline and there are fewer children available to play the game.

Globally, we are proud to be the world's largest youth sports organization, however, participation in the Little League program, as well as most youth team sports, continues to see a slight year-to-year decline. These are the challenges we face, and, to embrace them, we must also embrace change.

In January 2018, we celebrated the 27th Little League International Congress in New Orleans. Our District Administrators and delegates debated and voted on important changes to the Little League program. Looking ahead to the 2019 season, we will all be tasked to make changes that will allow Little League to overcome these challenges.

As I reflect on my first year as the Chairman of the Little League International Board of Directors, I am certain that my fellow Board members and all of our committed volunteer leaders, with strong support from our professional staff, are up to the task. We will work together to ensure that the core mission of the Little League program, providing a fun and beneficial baseball and softball experience to all children, remains at the forefront of Little League International and our thousands of local Little League programs in communities around the world.

Thank you to all of the volunteers and families who continue to be the heart of the Little League International program, and we look forward to an exciting 80th season of Little League in 2019.

Sincerely,

Hugh E. Tanner
Little League International Board of Directors Chairman

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New Orleans Welcomes Volunteers from Around the World



This past January, nearly 1,500 Little League® Baseball and Softball volunteers from around the world gathered together in New Orleans for the 27th Little League International Congress. The festivities officially got kicked off in style with the Opening Convocation as attendees were provided with a taste of the New Orleans culture, including a performance by a local gospel choir group, a visit from local Little Leaguers®, and a parade back to the hotel led by New Orleans performers.

Throughout the course of the weekend, Little League District Administrators (D.A.s) and Assistant District Administrators (A.D.A.s) gathered together for discussions on future rule

changes and to outline standards for exceptional leadership and volunteer service while providing Little League International with helpful insight from the field.

On the final day of Congress, volunteers were recognized at the District Volunteer Recognition Breakfast while enjoying a keynote discussion between ESPN's Kyle Peterson and Jessica Mendoza before rounding out the event at the Chairman's Banquet with a performance by former America's Got Talent's contestant The Passing Zone.



Award Winners

On the final day of the 27th Little League International Congress, Little League International recognized some of its highest-level volunteers during the District Volunteer Recognition Breakfast and the Chairman's Banquet. In addition to recognizing a D.A. from each region with the Meritorious Service Award and an A.D.A. from each region with the A.D.A. Little League International Commendation, Little League recognized those D.A.s who have contributed at least 20 years of service or more, including Wendle B. Stiber (Connecticut District 3) and Mary E. Ciacci (Hawaii District 6), who were presented with their 50 Years of Service Award.

Highlighting the Chairman's Banquet on the final night of Congress was the presentation of three major awards to a trio of dedicated volunteers, highlighting the dedication and commitment to the Little League Baseball and Softball program.



Rob Manfred (Left) presented award by Hugh E. Tanner, Little League® International Board of Directors Chairman

Rob Manfred Enshrined into Hall of Excellence

Rounding out the Opening Convocation of the 27th Little League International Congress was the enshrinement of Baseball Commissioner Robert D. Manfred, Jr., into the Little League® Hall of Excellence. Mr. Manfred earned Little League's highest honor based on his dedication to the growth of youth baseball and softball, his commitment to pursuing excellence, and his positive influence as a role model to aspiring Little Leaguers®. As part of his enshrinement ceremony, Mr. Manfred joined together with Little League President and CEO, Stephen D. Keener, and ESPN's Karl Ravech (pictured below) for a keynote discussion in front of more than 1,000 dedicated Little League volunteers.

A graduate of Rome (N.Y.) Little League, Mr. Manfred is the first alumnus of Little League to be elected as the Commissioner of Baseball. During Mr. Manfred's tenure as Commissioner, Major League Baseball has shifted its focus on connecting and engaging youth in baseball and softball and has shown tremendous support of Little League through initiatives and events such as PLAY BALL; MLB Pitch, Hit & Run; the Jr. Home Run Derby; All-Star Week related activities; the MLB Little League Classic, and Little League Days at MLB ballparks.



CHAIRMAN'S AWARD
Cado nau Family (Portland, Ore.), received by Tracey Cado nau Mckinnon and her husband, Bryce



PRESIDENT'S AWARD
Gary Kay (Florida District 12), presented by Stephen D. Keener (right)



PETER J. MCGOVERN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD
Dave Wetmore (California District 57), presented by Steven P. Johnson (right)



Grow the Game Grants

Since 2015, Little League® International has been dedicated to providing local leagues around the world with financial assistance through the Grow the Game Grant Program. With different grants earmarked for general local league improvement and to help leagues expand or establish Little League Softball®, Little League Challenger Division®, and Little League Urban Initiative programs, Little League International was able to provide nearly 60 local leagues around the world with more than \$1.1 million in financial support over the course of the last year through this program. Since its inception in 2015, the Grow the Game Grant Program has provided more than \$3.5 million to help more than 200 local leagues around the world and continues to find ways to grow the game at every level of the program.



Before



After

Belvedere Little League | Atlanta, GA.



Before



After

East Norriton Girls Athletic Association | Norristown, PA.



Before



After

Nanuet Little League | Nanuet, N.Y.



Light Installation



Light Installation

Westfield Little League | Westfield, Mass. Yough Little League | Smithton, PA.



Disaster Relief Efforts

According to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), 2017 was the costliest year ever for weather and climate disasters in the United States. Between Hurricanes Irma and Maria, as well as wildfires raging throughout California, local Little League® programs around the United States were devastated as their homes, fields, and communities felt the brunt of natural disaster.

work with Pitch In For Baseball and the newly formed Pitch In For Softball to provide Little Leaguers® with necessary baseball and softball equipment to return to the fields in their communities.

In addition, through Little League International's Grow the Game program's disaster relief grants, local leagues who were hit by the natural disasters in the last two years were able to get financial support to aid in their recovery. Little League International volunteers are identifying those needs and working through the grant process, and partners to provide those much-needed funds, supplies, and equipment to make the future seasons as successful, and fun, as possible. Little League seasons looked a lot different in many communities this year. There might not have been as many games under the lights, and fields that used to be well-maintained were a little bit more ragged. But what didn't change were the children playing, the smiles on their faces and on their families cheering them on.



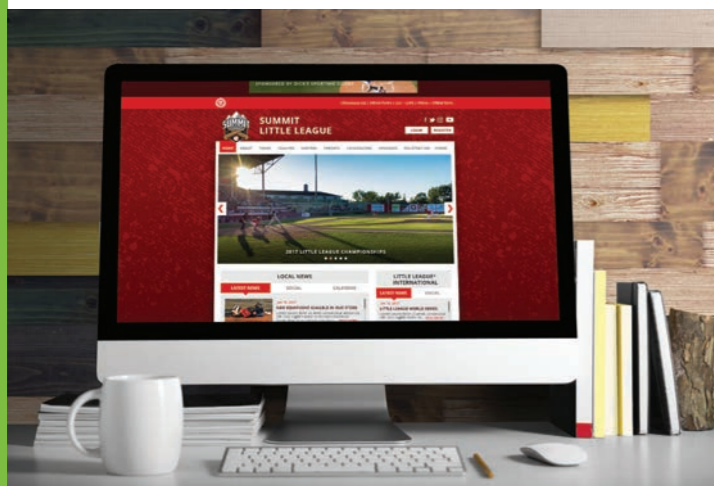
Credit: Getty Images

As disheartening as the stories of disaster have been, the stories of support are inspiring. Major League Baseball and the clubs have been actively working to help out Little League communities. Stories of MLB clubs supporting the players plagued by the fires, with support of equipment and supplies, continued as leagues began playing. The Houston Astros are working with the leagues still recovering from the historic flooding, as is DICK'S Sporting Goods, Visionworks, and other Little League partners. Little League International is also continuing to



Sponsor Support

Along with their support at the national level, some Official Sponsors of Little League® have assisted local leagues around the nation through their dedicated grant programs.



Along with their assistance providing local leagues with bat kits and technological assistance through their Team Sports HQ platform, DICK'S Sporting Goods worked through more than 50 community marketing managers around the country to provide support at the local league level.



In addition to its local support through the Let's Go See program, Visionworks, the Official Eyewear and Eye Care Retailer of Little League® Baseball and Softball, worked together with Little League International with six local league grant projects this past year.

Throughout the course of the year, Visionworks worked together with West Oaks Little League and Lumberton Little League in Houston, Bronxchester Little League in the Bronx, Roberto Clemente Little League in Chicago, and Windcrest Little League and Northwest Little League in San Antonio on a variety of different grant projects to help provide assistance and further build the Little League community in those areas.



HONDA

The Honda Little League Grant Program has donated more than \$1.2 million to underfunded leagues over the past two decades. From helping to improve playing fields and purchasing new equipment to rebuilding local Little League programs devastated by hurricanes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters, Honda has continued to support local leagues in need. This year, the Honda Grant Program was able to support a total of 19 local Little League programs and included assistance with field improvements and upgrades, equipment and apparel needs, scoreboard installations, and more.



USA Bat Kits and Tee Ball Stickers

In an effort to assist local Little League® programs in the adoption of the new USABat Standard, Little League International, through the Little League Grow the Game Grant Program and with additional support from DICK'S Sporting Goods, granted a number of USABat Standard "bat kits" from Easton Sports to local leagues in need. Eligible leagues who applied and were approved for this grant were provided with a "bat kit" that consists of 20 pre-selected Easton bats at various sizes and weights, all of which are compliant with the new USABat Standard and approved for use in the Little League Baseball® program.



Bat Kit: 20 pre-selected Easton bats of various sizes and weights, all of which are compliant with the new USABat Standard



In addition, Little League International provided local leagues who have chartered a Tee Ball program in 2018 with 25 free USA Baseball Tee Ball Stickers that can be used in their Tee Ball programs.

As part of the new standard, all Tee Ball bats in the Little League Baseball Tee Ball program must feature the USA Baseball mark and accompanying text.

Tee Ball bats (lengths 26" and shorter) that were produced and/or purchased prior to the implementation of the new standard can be certified using these Approved Tee Ball Sticker via the USA Baseball Tee Ball Sticker Program for use with approved Tee Ball baseballs approved for Little League play.



*Stickers should be applied directly to the bat's surface



The MLB™ Little League® Classic: Year Two



“Major League Baseball’s greatest responsibility is to ensure that today’s youth become active participants in our game as players and fans. The ‘MLB™ Little League® Classic’ exemplifies our entire sport’s commitment to building a stronger connection between young people and the National Pastime,” said Robert D. Manfred, Jr., Baseball Commissioner.

It wasn’t long after the end of the inaugural MLB Little League Classic in 2017 that plans for the second one started to take form. And, an August 19 matchup between the Philadelphia Phillies and New York Mets was the perfect setting for year number two.

The Phillies, Mets, and MLB rolled into Williamsport that Sunday morning for the second MLB Little League International Classic presented by GEICO. At the heart of the visit was the teams converging on the Little League International Complex to experience the Little League Baseball® World Series, interact with Little Leaguers® and fans, and relive the dreams that they, and millions of others, had as children: making it to Williamsport.

With the MLB teams were three players who have lived that envious dream. Philadelphia Phillies’ infielder, Scott Kingery, played in the 2006 Little League Baseball World Series with his team from Ahwatukee (Ariz.) Little League. The Mets featured two Williamsport alums: Michael Conforto, who played in 2004 for Redmond (Wash.) North Little League,

and Todd Frazier, who was the winning pitcher of the 1998 Little League Baseball World Series Championship game. Joining Mr. Frazier in Williamsport this summer was his Toms River (N.J.) East American Little League teammates, who were celebrating the 20th Anniversary of their Little League World Series Championship. Mr. Kingery, Mr. Conforto, and Mr. Frazier were each presented with a custom piece of artwork by Williamsport-area artist Fred Gilmour, reflecting their Little League World Series experience and the MLB accomplishments (pictured, next page, bottom).



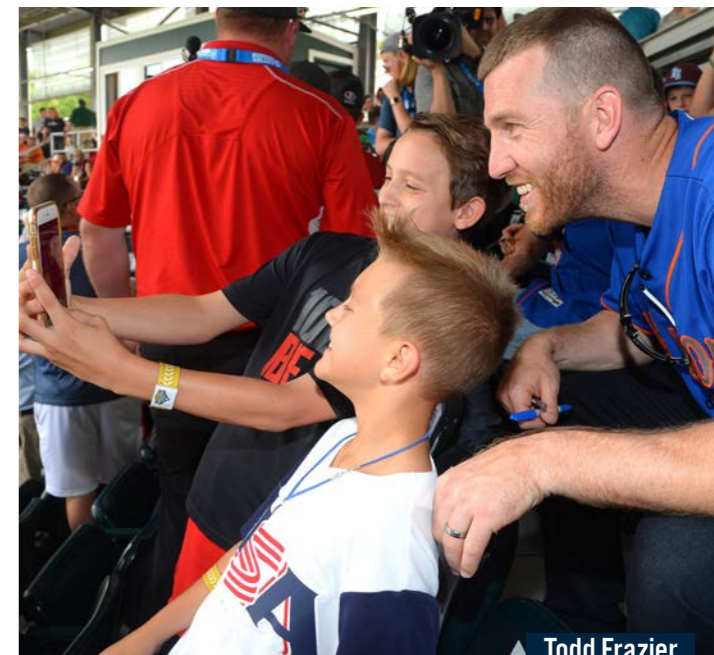
Jake Arrieta

As the Little League games wrapped up for the day, the focus turned to Historic Bowman Field in Williamsport for the MLB Little League Classic game between the Mets and the Phillies. From joining iconic Phillies public address announcer Dan Baker to call player introductions, to a dance-off with the Phillie Phanatic, Mr. Met, and Dugout, to taking over the D.J. booth, the Little League World Series players were the honored guests at the game, with many of the players experiencing their first-ever MLB game.

In the end, the Mets won 8-2, but the game concluded like a Little League game, with the two teams coming together to shake hands, in what has become a new tradition at this hallmark event of the MLB season.

That tradition will continue in 2019 when the third MLB Little League Classic is played on August 18 in Williamsport, featuring the Chicago Cubs and the Pittsburgh Pirates.

“The MLB Little League Classic has been a fun summer highlight for Baseball the past two years,” said Mr. Manfred. “We are thrilled to give both the Major League players and Little Leaguers another opportunity in 2019 to have the direct personal interaction that strengthens and inspires a lifelong passion for our game. We look forward to joining the Pirates and Cubs in Williamsport to welcome an outstanding collection of engaging players as great ambassadors of our sport.”



Todd Frazier





PLAY BALL - Williamsport, PA

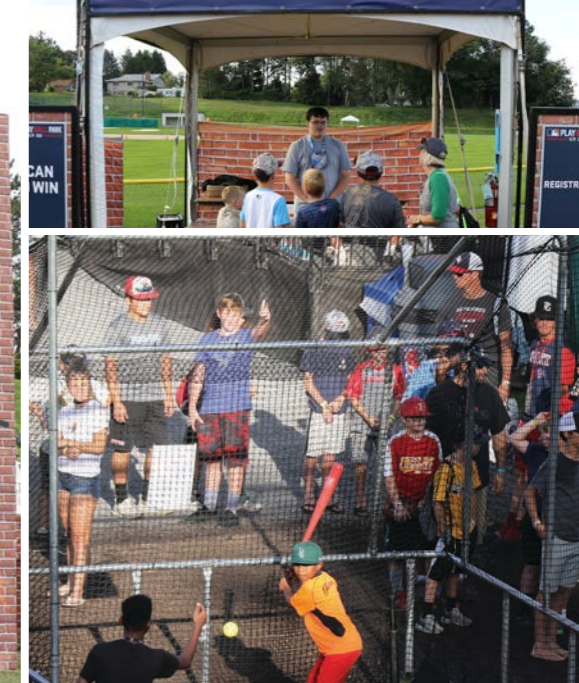
In celebration of Major League Baseball's PLAY BALL Initiative, which was launched by MLB and USA Baseball in 2015 as an effort to encourage youth participation in both formal and casual baseball and softball activities, Little League® International hosted its third annual, free "PLAY BALL Day" event at the Little League International Complex on Saturday, July 14. Open to all children ages 5 to 12, the event invited children to come out and experience a variety of different fun and skill-developing activities on the same fields where the Little League Baseball® World Series are held each year.

In addition to the various activities held on both Lamade and Volunteer Stadium, participants had the opportunity to visit the Easton Hit Lab, explore the *World of Little League® Museum and Official Store*, and visit the Little League Stadium Gift Shop. In total, more than 175 participants attended this year's event and each of the participants were provided a free PLAY BALL Bat Kit.



PLAY BALL - Monterrey, Mexico

This year, Major League Baseball's PLAY BALL Initiative went international, as MLB and Little League partnered up on May 7 to allow Little Leaguers® all over Mexico to come out and Play Ball! During the exciting event held at Estadio de Béisbol Monterrey, more than 300 participants engaged in baseball-related drills before enjoying a local Little League® game, played on the same field that the Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego Padres played on just one day prior as part of the 2018 Mexico Series.



PLAY BALL Park at the LLBWS

For the second year in a row, Major League Baseball's "PLAY BALL Park" made an appearance at the Little League Baseball® World Series in Williamsport, Pa. Located just behind Volunteer Stadium as a part of the Family Fun Zone, PLAY BALL Park is a free, interactive attraction created by Major League Baseball to provide opportunities for children and teenagers to play baseball and softball in a fun, welcoming setting. With opportunities to show off skills in both a plastic ball and Virtual Home Run Derby areas, PLAY BALL Park provides children of all ages with a fun opportunity to get involved in the game while visiting the LLBWS.



MLB VR Home Run Derby

In celebration of the start of the Little League Baseball® World Series, and in a continued effort to engage and impact a young audience, Major League Baseball hosted a special Virtual Reality Home Run Derby on Wednesday, August 15 inside PLAY BALL Park. Each of the 16 participating teams in the LLBWS sent one Little Leaguer® to represent their team where they had 90 seconds to hit as many home runs as possible. Aiden Wilkins of the New England Region went on to win the event, hitting six home runs for a score of 5,415 to defeat Yuta Shimizu of the Japan Region in the bracket-style elimination challenge.

A live stream of The Home Run Derby VR Little League Challenge presented by DICK's Sporting Goods was available on ESPN3 and the ESPN app, while a 30-minute recap of the exciting event aired on ESPN during the coverage of the MLB Little League Classic on Sunday, August 19. The widely popular broadcast featured commentary from MLB Network's Alexa Datt with analysis from popular gamers and content creators, RealShelfy and Fuzzy.



Photo Credit: Alex Trautwig/MLB Photos

MLB All-Star Game

While the 2018 MLB All-Star Festivities were filled with incredible moments and exciting highlights from plenty of the league's biggest stars, it was Little Leaguers® past and present that shined in the spotlight during this year's Mid-Summer Classic.

From current Little Leaguers competing in events such as the MLB Challenger Game, the Junior Home Run Derby, and the Pitch, Hit, and Run National Finals, to a number of Little League® graduates showing off their skills at the Futures Game, Home Run Derby, and the MLB All-Star game, Little Leaguers of all ages had a chance to shine in the spotlight this July in Washington, D.C. The excitement wasn't limited to inside the foul lines, however, as a local Little League Program received the surprise of a lifetime as Washington Nationals superstar Bryce Harper made a special presentation with a newly renovated field dedication.



Photo Credit: Alex Trautwig/MLB Photos

Photo Credit: Alex Trautwig/MLB Photos



Little League® Days

As part of the growing partnership by Little League® and MLB that is focused on fostering interest and encouraging participation in youth-centered baseball and softball activities, and continued efforts by MLB clubs around the nation, "Little League Days" provides opportunities for local youth baseball and softball players to experience a professional baseball game at a ballpark near them.

This year, a total of 25 Major League Baseball clubs opened their ballparks to local youth baseball and softball players to provide memorable opportunities and experiences for the future stars of the game. While each club's Little League Days are set to be unique, many provide discounted tickets for Little Leaguers, the opportunity to use tickets as fundraisers, and provide the Little Leaguers the opportunity for a special on-field experience. More information on MLB Little League Days can be found at MLB.com/LittleLeague.



This year, a total of 25 Major League Baseball clubs opened their ballparks to local youth baseball and softball players

Urban Initiative Jamborees at MLB Stadiums

Major League Baseball (MLB) clubs from around the nation are helping big dreams come true by donating tickets to allow Little Leaguers® from under-served areas to attend games this summer as part of the Little League Urban Initiative Jamboree weekends. For many of these Little Leaguers, the opportunity marked the first time ever attending a professional baseball game and all comes as part of a memorable weekend experience filled with games, awards ceremonies, and more. In 2018, the Atlanta Braves, Houston Astros, Oakland Athletics, San Diego Padres, Tampa Bay Rays, and Texas Rangers all shared their support by donating tickets to allow the participants to attend a game.





Little League Baseball® World Series

Honolulu (Hawaii) Little League took home the 2018 LLBWS Championship with a 3-0 victory over Kawaguchi (Japan) LL.

Asia-Pacific: South Seoul (South Korea) LL

Australia: Gold Coast (Queensland) Baseball Association LL

Canada: Whalley LL (Surrey, B.C.)

Caribbean: Radames Lopez LL (Guayama, P.R.)

Europe and Africa: Catalunya LL (Barcelona, Spain)

Great Lakes: Grosse Pointe Woods-Shores (Mich.) LL

Japan: Kawaguchi (Saitama) LL

Latin America: Vacamonte LL (Arraijan, Panama)

Mexico: Matamoros (Tamaulipas) LL

Mid-Atlantic: Mid Island LL (Staten Island, N.Y.)

Midwest: Grandview LL (Des Moines, Iowa)

New England: Coventry (R.I.) LL

Northwest: Coeur d'Alene (Idaho) LL

Southeast: Peachtree City (Ga.) American LL

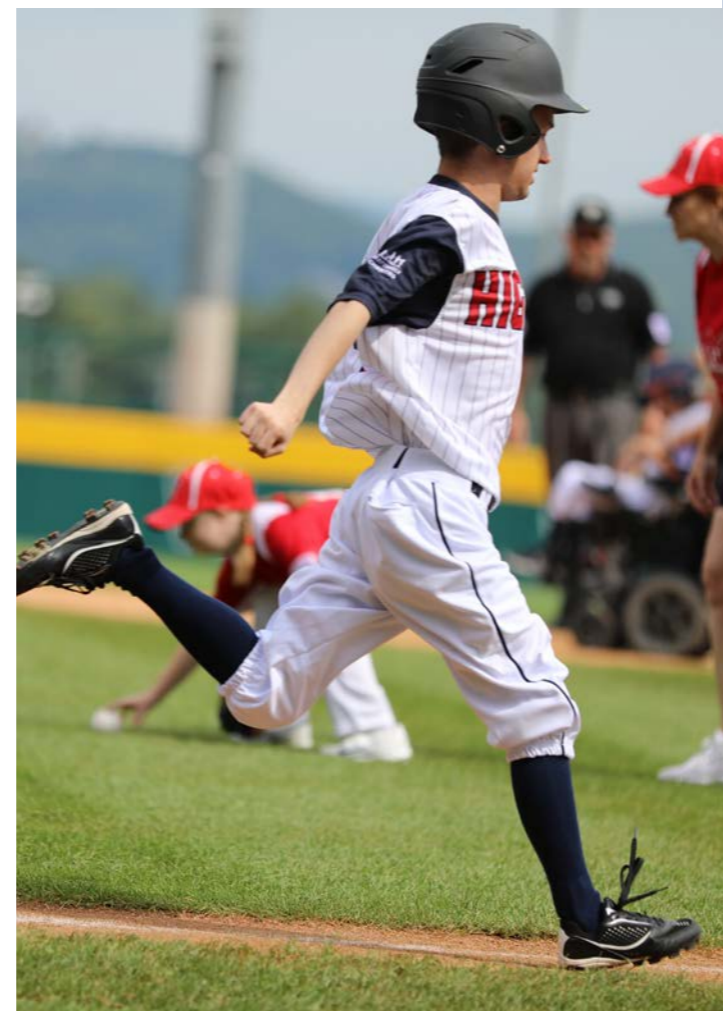
Southwest: Post Oak LL (Houston, Texas)

West: Honolulu (Hawaii) LL

Little League Challenger Division® Exhibition Game

This year, Hazleton (Pa.) Little League and Highland Baseball Club (Evansville, Ind.) Little League were featured in the 2018 Little League Challenger Division® Exhibition Game during the Little League Baseball® World Series.

Located less than 100 miles from Williamsport, Hazleton Little League is the former home to Chicago Cubs Manager Joe Maddon who continues to praise the league for helping to hone his baseball acumen and shape his character. Led by the 2016 Little League® Challenger Award recipient, Matt Pokorney, the Highland Baseball Club Little League has worked directly with the Little League Grow the Game Grant Program, the Honda Little League Grant Program, and Evansville native Don Mattingly through the Mattingly Charities to make facility improvements and offer the best possible resources for all of its participants throughout the Evansville community.



Little League Softball® World Series

Wheelersburg (Ohio) Little League took home the 2018 LLSWS Championship with a 3-0 victory over Tunkhannock (Pa.) Little League.

Asia-Pacific: Bacolod City (Philippines) West LL

Canada: Layritz LL (Victoria, B.C.)

Central: Wheelersburg (Ohio) LL

East: Tunkhannock (Pa.) LL

Europe and Africa: Northwest Czech Republic LL

Host: Lake Oswego (Ore.) Girls Softball LL

Latin America: Cuauhtemoc LL (Monterrey, Mexico)

Southeast: Daniel Boone LL (Gray, Tenn.)

Southwest: Eastbank LL (River Ridge, La.)

West: Kirkland (Wash.) LL



25 Years at Alpenrose Dairy Farm

This August, Little League Softball® celebrated its 25th year of World Series championships at Alpenrose Stadium in Portland, Ore. Since 1891 when family patriarch Florian Cadonau first began delivering milk from his dairy farm just southwest of downtown Portland, Ore., the Alpenrose Dairy Farm has grown into a community institution. In 1994, decades after Mr. Cadonau added baseball fields to the Alpenrose Dairy Farm, the Little League Softball World Series called Alpenrose home for the first time. Today, of Little League's seven World Series tournaments, only the Little League Baseball World Series in Williamsport; and the Junior League Baseball World Series in Taylor, Mich., have longer tenures at their respective locations.





Junior League Baseball World Series

Shing-Ming Junior Little League from Taoyuan, Chinese Taipei, won the 2018 JLBWS Championship with a 2-0 victory over Lufkin (Texas) Little League.

- Asia-Pacific:** Shing-Ming Junior LL (Taoyuan, Chinese Taipei)
- Australia:** Hills LL (Sydney, NSW)
- Canada:** Diamond Baseball LL (Mirabel, Quebec)
- Central:** Warren Park Youth Baseball LL (Chicago, Ill.)
- East:** Johnsonburg/Kane/Ridgway Area (Pa.) LL
- Europe and Africa:** Emilia Romagna LL (Bologna, Italy)
- Host:** Brownstown (Mich.) LL
- Latin America:** Aruba Center LL (Santa Cruz, Aruba)
- Mexico:** Guadalupe Treviño Kelly LL (Reynosa, Mexico)
- Southeast:** Elbert County (Ga.) LL
- Southwest:** Lufkin (Texas) LL
- West:** Manhattan (Calif.) Beach LL



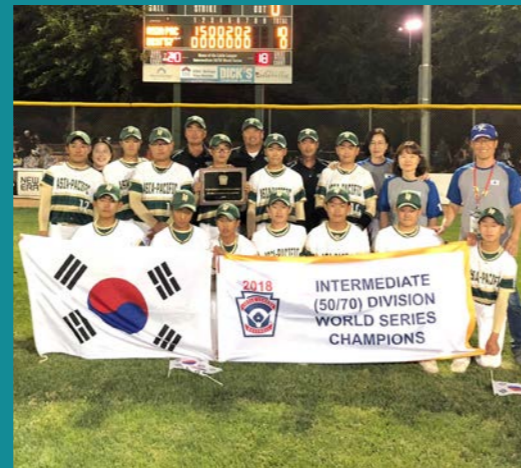
Senior League Baseball World Series

Pariba Little League of Willemstad, Curaçao, took home the 2018 SLBWS Championship with a 7-2 victory over Naamans Little League of Wilmington, Del.

- Asia-Pacific:** Saipan (CNMI) LL
- Australia:** Cronulla LL (Sydney, NSW)
- Canada:** Confederation Park LL (Edmonton, Alberta)
- Caribbean:** Pariba LL (Willemstad, Curaçao)
- Central:** Southern LL (Grand Rapids, Mich.)
- East:** Naamans LL (Wilmington, Del.)
- Europe and Africa:** Emilia Romagna LL (Bologna, Italy)
- Host:** Easley (S.C.) LL
- Latin America:** Cardenales LL (Barquisimeto, Venezuela)
- Southeast:** North Springs LL (Coral Springs, Fla.)
- Southwest:** Waco (Texas) Southern LL
- West:** Central East Maui LL (Wailuku, Hawaii)

Intermediate (50/70) Baseball Division World Series

West Seoul (South Korea) Little League claimed the 2018 Championship title with a 10-0 victory over the Host team from Livermore/Granada (Calif.) Little League.



- Asia-Pacific:** West Seoul (South Korea) LL
- Australia:** Perth Metro North LL (Western Australia)
- Canada:** Coquitlam/Whalley LL (Coquitlam/Surrey, B.C.)
- Central:** Ankeny (Iowa) National LL
- East:** Commack (N.Y.) North LL
- Europe and Africa:** South Czech Republic LL
- Host:** Livermore/Granada (Calif.) LL
- Latin America:** Guadalupe Treviño Kelly LL (Reynosa, Mexico)
- Puerto Rico:** Radames Lopez LL (Guayama, P.R.)
- Southeast:** West Boynton Beach (Fla.) LL
- Southwest:** Mid-City LL (Midland, Texas)
- West:** Scripps Ranch LL (San Diego, Calif.)



Europe and Africa Region Utilizes New Tournament Structure

This year, for the first time ever, the Europe and Africa Region utilized a new tournament structure to allow the opportunity for more leagues to experience the iconic Little League® International Tournament and compete for a spot in Williamsport. The decision to establish the new structure was made based on discussions and feedback made by Little League District Administrators during the Europe and Africa Region District Administrator Meeting in October 2016.

A total of 12 teams participated in the Regional Tournament, made up of 10 country champions who received automatic entry based on country participation and enrollment numbers, while the remaining two spots were earned through an at-large tournament by any additional country champions wishing to enter. Through this new structure, all eligible teams interested in competing in the regional tournament have an opportunity to earn a spot in the field of 12 without worrying about capping the tournament at 14 teams.



Junior League Softball World Series

Snow Canyon Little League from Santa Clara, Utah, claimed the 2018 JLSWS with a 9-3 victory over Smithville (Texas) Little League.

- Asia-Pacific:** Bacolod City (Philippines) West LL
- Canada:** Ponoka (Alberta) LL
- Central:** Poland Community (Ohio) LL
- East:** Cranston (R.I.) Nat. Budlong Girls Softball LL
- Europe-Africa:** Emilia Romagna LL (Bologna, Italy)
- Host:** Redmond (Wash.) West/North LL
- Latin America:** Coama (P.R.) LL
- Southeast:** Keystone/West Tampa/Bayshore (Fla.) LL
- Southwest:** Smithville (Texas) LL
- West:** Snow Canyon LL (Santa Clara, Utah)



Senior League Softball World Series

Tanauan Little League from Batangas, Philippines, won the 2018 SLSWS title with a 7-0 victory over Texas District 9 Little League. It was the first SLSWS Championship for an Asia-Pacific Region team.

- Asia-Pacific:** Tanauan LL (Batangas, Philippines)
- Canada:** Elnora (Alberta) Eagles Softball LL
- Central:** Indiana District 10 LL (Fort Wayne, Ind.)
- East:** Jesse Burkett LL (Worcester, Mass.)
- Europe and Africa:** Rotterdam/Den Haag (Netherlands) LL
- Host:** Georgetown (Del.) LL
- Latin America:** ASOFEM (Puerto Rico) LL
- Southeast:** Florida District 9 LL (Fort Myers, Fla.)
- Southwest:** Texas District 9 LL (Waco, Texas)
- West:** Gold Coast LL (Honokaa, Hawaii)



New Scoreboards Highlight Game Day Experience

This summer at the Little League Baseball® World Series, fans and players from around the world got to enjoy a brand new in-game experience thanks to the addition of three state-of-the-art LED Video Display Scoreboards, thanks to the support from of the Easton family and the Easton Foundations. The two scoreboards located at each of the two stadiums have been replaced with brand-new displays while a third board has been added along the back of Lamade Stadium for fans walking across the complex to enjoy. The new display board provided fans with new opportunities including exciting social media posts from fans, game-day updates and schedules, and more.

Softball Leads Expanded Coverage of LLWS Broadcasts

In 2018, Little League® fans had the opportunity to watch almost twice as many games thanks to the launch of ESPN+, the new direct-to-consumer subscription streaming service from Disney Direct-to-Consumer and International Group, in conjunction with ESPN. Highlighting the expanded Little League coverage in 2018 was a major increase in softball coverage with more than 100 softball games available live on the ESPN Family of Networks. Over the course of 37 days, more than 230 baseball and softball games were available on the ESPN Family of Networks for Little League fans from all over to enjoy.

This summer marked the first time that the entire Little League Softball® World Series, as well as all U.S. Little League

More Than 700 Highlights Shown From World Series and Regional Games

Throughout the course of the summer, Little League® International was able to provide more than 700 video highlights from the more than 230 Little League World Series and Regional games that were broadcasted through the ESPN Family of Networks and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) this past year. From impressive catches and unforgettable moments of sportsmanship to the final out of every championship game, these highlights provided viewers with an exciting glimpse of all the action happening around the United States this summer. All of the highlights from the 2018 Little League World Series and Regional games can be seen at LittleLeague.org/Videos.

Softball Regional Tournament games, were covered in their entirety. With the entire tournament now being broadcasted, the 2018 Little League Softball Regional and World Series events also featured the use of replay, marking the first usage by any softball organization. As part of the expanded coverage, Little League International was able to share nearly 300 video highlights from the more than 100 softball games that were broadcasted this summer, while the highlight of the Asia-Pacific Region's victory at the Senior League Softball World Series brought in more than 2.9 million impressions on Facebook.



Parents of the Year: Mike and Mary Brach

Mike and Mary Brach, parents of 2016 MLB All-Star and current member of the Atlanta Braves, Brad Brach, have forever been ingrained in the game of baseball. The parents of three sons, all of which grew up and played in the Freehold Twp. (N.J.) Little League program, Mr. and Mrs. Brach have truly exemplified what it means to be Little League® parents and were dedicated to volunteering within the league. While most people may recognize their son, Brad, as the big name in the family because of his role with the Orioles and Braves, it was his brother, Brett, who had the biggest moment in Little League. In 2004, Brett helped lead his team to the Senior League Baseball World Series Championship as the winning pitcher, with his father as his coach.



Mike and Mary Brach (right) along with their son, Brett, and his family

Thomas Tull Enshrined Into the Hall of Excellence

Just two years after watching the Little League® he once played for capture the Little League Baseball® World Series Championship title, Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Tulco and 2016 Maine-Endwell Little League sponsor, Thomas Tull, returned to Williamsport to receive Little League's highest honor, enshrinement into the Little League Hall of Excellence. With his enshrinement ceremony prior to the 2018 LLBWS Championship Game on August 26, Mr. Tull became the 57th member of the Little League Hall of Excellence.



Thomas Tull and his family

2018 Little League Award Winners



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
Terry Dodd
Issaquah (Wash.) LL



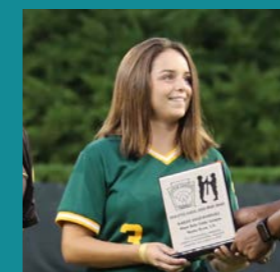
SOFTBALL VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
Colette Cloyd
Michigan District 16 (Belleville, Mich.)



CHALLENGER AWARD
Beverly Newsome
Washington District 8 Challenger Division



HOWARD AND GAIL PASTER URBAN INITIATIVE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
Dwight Fobbs
Port Arthur (Texas) American LL



GOOD SPORT OF THE YEAR
Kailee Diaz-Randall
Westside LL (Santa Rosa, Calif.)



MOM OF THE YEAR
Maegan Bowen
Yulee (Fla.) LL



CARL E. STOTZ LITTLE LEAGUE COMMUNITY AWARD
Northeast Los Angeles (Calif.) Little League

New Little League® Partners

This year, Little League® International had two exciting announcements regarding new partners looking to provide resources to local leagues around the world.



This summer, Little League International announced the addition of Chick-fil-A as the official Quick-Service Restaurant of Little League Baseball and Softball. The partnership was highlighted during the Little League Baseball® World Series with hosted dinner events for all the participants, on-site Chick-fil-A concessions, and more.



This April, DICK'S Sporting Goods and DICK'S Team Sports HQ announced its bulk baseball and softball equipment business A.D. STARR has been named the Official Ball Supplier of the Little League® World Series. As the Official Ball of the Little League World Series, A.D. STARR balls were used at all seven World Series events and was the recommended ball for tournaments at all levels of play within the Little League program.



In addition, Little League International welcomed on a new licensee, Creative Outdoor Distributors, that offers a line of outdoor chairs that will be available for sale at national retail outlets.



Merchandising

Earlier this year, at the Little League® International Congress in New Orleans, Little League International organized an on-site store location for all of the District Administrators and delegates to explore, with custom Congress merchandise, apparel designed specifically for District Administrators, and more.

Another exciting addition in 2018 to Little League International's merchandising efforts came during the Little League Baseball® World Series as DICK'S Sporting Goods joined together with Little League International to operate the on-site sales of all MLB Little League Classic merchandise to grow the excitement surround the second-year event.

Finally, Little League International expanded its offerings with a new line of vintage-inspired merchandise launched in 2018 that was made available at the *World of Little League® Museum and Official Store*.



Family Fun Zone

As it does every August during the Little League Baseball® World Series, the Family Fun Zone provided visitors with engaging and family-friendly interaction with the official sponsors of Little League® Baseball and Softball. This year, some of the exciting opportunities that the Family Fun Zone provided included virtual reality games, customized pins, special guest appearances, exciting giveaways, and more.



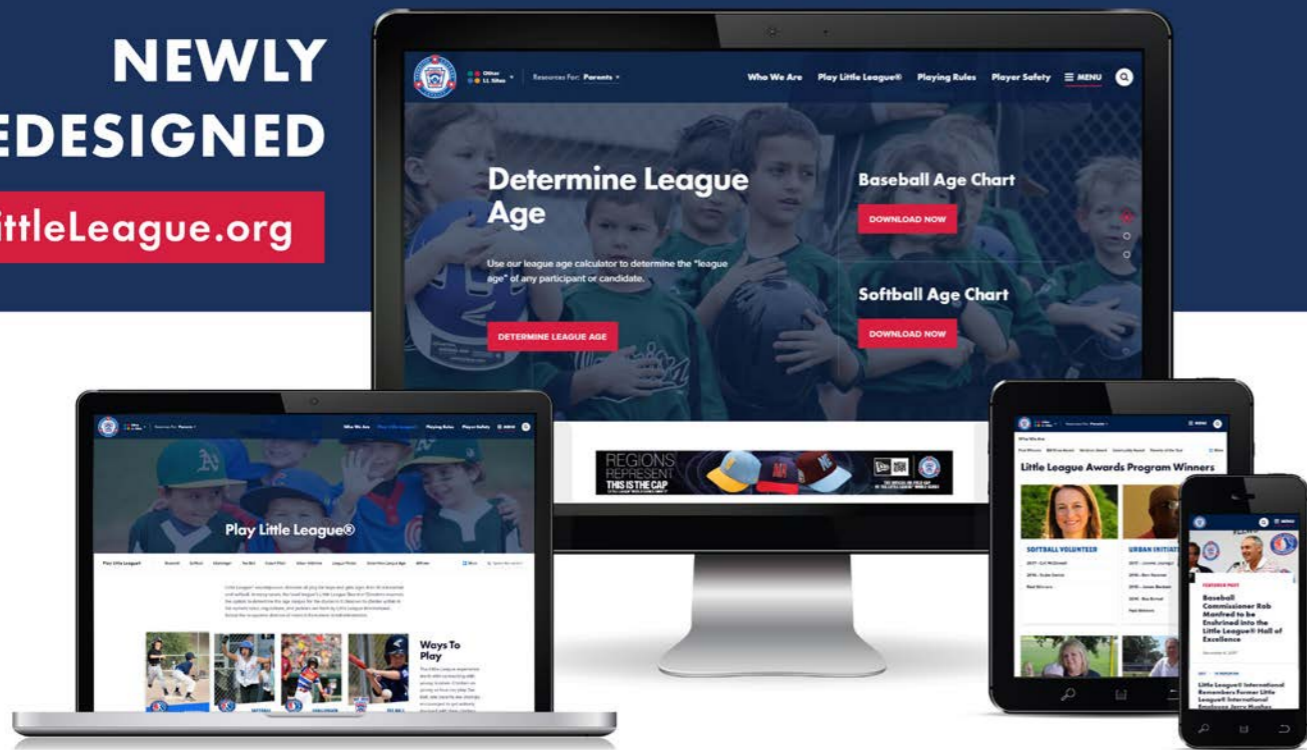
Sports Matter Monday

Little League® Baseball and Softball and its official partner, DICK'S Sporting Goods, teamed up during the 2018 Little League Baseball® World Series (LLBWS) to celebrate "Sports Matter Monday" in celebration of The DICK'S Sporting Goods Foundation Sports Matter initiative.

On Monday, August 20, participants of the LLBWS wore specially made green "Sports Matter" caps to help raise awareness for the Sports Matter campaign, a nationwide initiative focused on raising money and awareness for the youth sports funding crisis. In addition, a unique baseball featuring the Sports Matter logo was used for all games of the LLBWS played that day and each of the participants were once again provided with a set of green shoelaces to wear through the entirety of the tournament to support the initiative.



NEWLY REDESIGNED
LittleLeague.org



Newly Designed LittleLeague.org

In January 2018, Little League® International officially announced the launch of its newly designed LittleLeague.org which offers users a one-stop resource to access information and tools in an improved layout designed for all devices. The site also includes more robust search capabilities, consistent design elements, and a streamlined user experience.

With the launch of the new website, Little League is further enhanced its online presence by incorporating the sites of its regional headquarters, revamping the Little League Baseball® World Series site, enhancing Divisional World Series sites, relaunching Little League University, and integrating an enhanced videos archive and official store. Little League International will continue to develop and enhance its online presence through the newly designed LittleLeague.org in order to provide users with the best possible web experience.

Educational Webinars

Over the last year, a live webinar series was made available for league and district officials through Little League University (LLU). Recorded live and later made available on the League Officials tab of LLU, each webinar was hosted by Nick Carangi, Little League International Senior Director of Operations and Education, and welcomed a guest presenter to contribute expert insight the conversation.

A variety of timely and engaging topics invited all attendees to register and participate by submitting questions during these daytime events. Topics of the webinars included Combined Teams; Interleague Play; Fundraising and Sponsorship; Websites and Social Media; Player Draft Methods; Parents, Volunteers, and Appointments; and Tournament Affidavits. In addition to these webinars, additional webinars were made available for members of the Little League Umpire Registry and hosted by Tom Rawlings, Little League International's Director of Umpire Development.

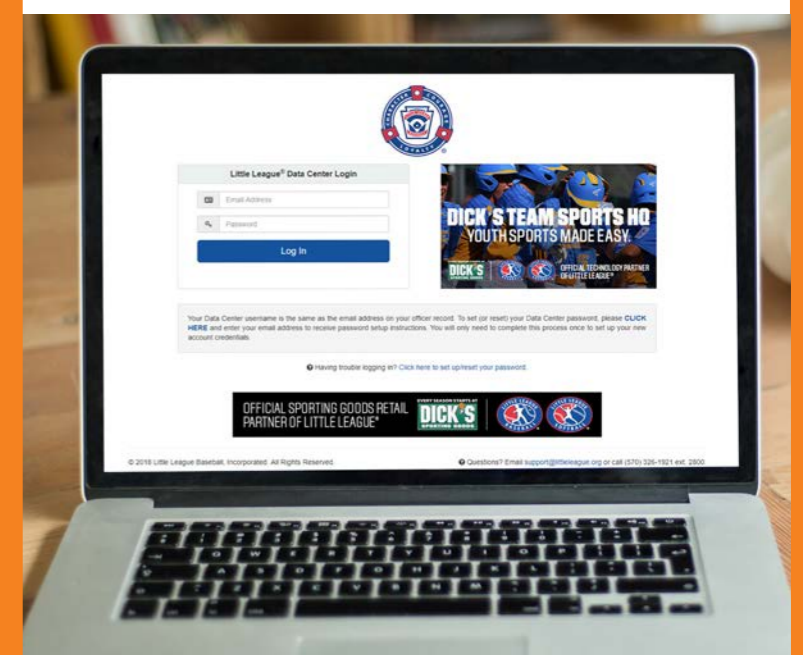


Data Center Brings Digital Solutions to Local League Operations

There are more than a million Little League® volunteers. They are moms and dads; foster parents and grandparents; doctors and construction workers, and the commitment and dedication that these individuals bring to the Little League program allow the children in their community to have a meaningful and fun experience on baseball and softball fields around the world.

Administering any volunteer-run, non-profit organization comes with an annual set of responsibilities, and, in Little League International's commitment to providing the tools to make operating a local league as easy as possible for its volunteers, a newly revamped Little League Data Center was fully launched for the 2018 Little League season. With an easy-to-use design, the new Data Center brought the chartering and insurance enrollment process, safety plan submission, and tournament administration online and has become a destination for local league administrators and District Administrators in monitoring league activity, updating league officer information, and processing financial operations.

Throughout the 2018 season, the Little League Data Center continued to expand and provide additional tools for league and district management, including connecting directly with DICK'S Team Sports HQ, powered by Blue Sombrero, to allow for leagues utilizing their technology services to have additional benefits to make operating a Little League program easier for dedicated Little League volunteers.





Video Features Tell Little League® Story

Over the course of the last year, Little League® International produced nearly 100 video features that were featured on LittleLeague.org, Little League University, and Little League's official social media platforms. Ranging from educational tutorials and resources to feature stories highlighting leagues and volunteers, this year's video features share what Little League does for communities all around the world. In addition to more than 15 video features surrounding the Little League Baseball® World Series in Williamsport, Little League created on-site video features in Poland, Mexico, and Livermore, Calif. All of the videos can be found at LittleLeague.org/Videos.



Little League® Commercials Hit the Airwaves

This year, there were 231 Little League® International Tournament games broadcast on the ESPN family of networks, but there was an additional 5 hours, 9 minutes, and 30 seconds of Little League messaging on those ESPN networks.

Little League Public Service Announcements (PSAs), produced by ESPN, aired in commercial breaks on the networks not only during the Little League Tournament games in July and August, but also from October through February, when most local Little League programs are holding their registrations.

To help fill those hours, Little League and ESPN teamed up to produce two brand new PSAs this year. *Teammates No Matter What* tells the story of a Little Leaguer® who struck out, and his friend and teammate who comes back to the dugout to lift his spirits. The other PSA, *Just Me and You, Kid*, shares the connection between a father and his son during a coach pitch game, where dad can't find the strike zone and needs a lift from his son. Both of these PSAs can be viewed on LittleLeague.org/Videos.



In addition to this year's 231 Little League International Tournament games broadcast on the ESPN Family of Networks, there was an additional

5 Hours | **9** Minutes | **30** Seconds

of Little League commercials airing on ESPN networks.



Increased Social Media Exposure

Little League's social media accounts saw continued growth in 2018, reaching platform goals and driving a record number of combined impressions across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Across these three platforms, Little League® has now amassed an audience of more than 643,000 followers and reaches more than one million users per week.

Posting of native social video directly into users' feeds increased dramatically year-over-year, leading to a spike in direct consumption of Little League video content on social media in 2018. Included in this effort are 21 archived games, re-broadcast by Little League for the first time on Facebook Live.

In addition to highlights from additional games carried by the ESPN Family of Networks, Little League also launched with World Series-related content on Instagram Stories and IGTV.

Little League® has now amassed an audience of more than

643,000 Followers

and reaches over one million users per week

Behind-the-Scenes Video Series: Beyond the Fences

This year, Little League® provided fans with a unique look inside the Little League Baseball® World Series in Williamsport. Filmed from the point of view of the players, the "Beyond the Fences" series provided viewers with a behind-the-scenes look at what goes on in Williamsport away from the ESPN cameras. The series was comprised of 11 short videos, ranging from a look at the Grand Slam Parade and the MLB Little League Classic to what the players do when the games for the day get rained out. All 11 videos from the "Beyond the Fences" series can be found at LittleLeague.org/Videos.

BEYOND THE FENCES





Inspirational Glove from Nigeria

The *World of Little League® Museum and Official Store*'s newest acquisition is made mostly of cardboard. The hand-made, right-hander's baseball glove, fashioned by 9-year-old Little Leaguer® Philip Adeeri Fagbenro of the Ekiti Kete Little League in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria, is now considered one of the Museum's most important artifacts.

Comprised of cardboard, paper, glue, black thread, and copper wire, the glove also has a magazine photo of former Phillies outfielder/first baseman Von Hayes, who played for Philadelphia from 1983 to 1991, to mimic other gloves that are endorsed by Major League Baseball players.

After seeing a photo of Philip and his glove on Facebook, the Museum asked if the glove could be displayed in the Museum. In return, the Museum sent Philip a brand-new Easton glove as well as a kit of other baseball equipment and school supplies for his community to utilize. When the package arrived, Philip and members of his community joined together in celebration and shared with the Museum a video of them dancing and singing in joy.



First Inning Update

The *World of Little League® Museum and Official Store* updated the "First Inning" feature video detailing the history and importance of the Little League Baseball and Softball program. The new, updated video features a variety of footage from the modern era and a voiceover by Jessica Mendoza, a two-time Olympic medalist with USA Softball, a Little League® mom, and one of the coolest Coach Pitch coaches in the world.



MLB Exhibit

Visitors to the *World of Little League® Museum and Official Store* will have the opportunity to experience a brand-new exhibit as Little League® shares its historical connection with Major League Baseball. The new MLB exhibit includes everything from game-used memorabilia and the inaugural ticket from the MLB Little League Classic to personal items provided to the museum from Anthony Rizzo's parents, highlighted by the bat, jersey, and hat from his World Series run with the Chicago Cubs. Also on display are artifacts from five-time All-Star and seven-time Gold Glove winner, Mike Mussina, including the glove, ball, and jersey from his final year as a Major Leaguer with the New York Yankees.

Located at the end of the "Second Inning: Heritage" of the Museum, the new exhibit offers visitors an exciting transition into the "Third Inning: Connections" area of the museum, which features the most-complete Babe Ruth game-worn uniform on display in the entire world, as it ties the historical connection between Little League and Major League Baseball.





A Safety Awareness Program (ASAP)

At the heart of the A Safety Awareness Program (ASAP) is the well-being of the Little Leaguers®. From preventing physical injuries, to helping build confidence and emotional health, to making the experience as fun as it can be for everyone involved, it's all about the Little Leaguers. During the 2018 Little League® season, no league embodied the spirit of ASAP more than Chino (Calif.) American Little League and for that were named the National ASAP Award Winners and received a Musco Light Structure Green™ lighting system for a 200-foot field for the honor.

Among its safety initiatives, CALL features a concussion awareness program; extensive enforcement of players wearing proper protective equipment; along with repairing and replacing of damaged protective equipment, as needed. In addition to its more “universal” physical safety initiatives, Chino American Little League also looks to institute policies based on its geographic location, as well as players’ self-confidence and emotional well-being.

The ASAP program showed substantial growth in 2018, topping 90 percent of the all United States Little Leagues participating. This year’s 91 percent participation total marks a three percent increase over 2017 (88 percent); and is the first time in the program’s history that more than 90 percent of all submitted plans have been approved.



2018 ASAP Regional Award Winners

Central Region

Grant County Little League (Crittenden, Ky.)
Gull Lake Little League (Richland, Mich.)

East Region

Glenburn (Maine) Little League
Plains (Pa.) Little League

Southeast Region

Central Springfield (Va.) Little League
Greater West Melbourne (Fla.) Little League

Southwest Region

High Plains Little League (Falcon, Colo.)
Three Rivers Little League (Eagle, Colo.)

West Region

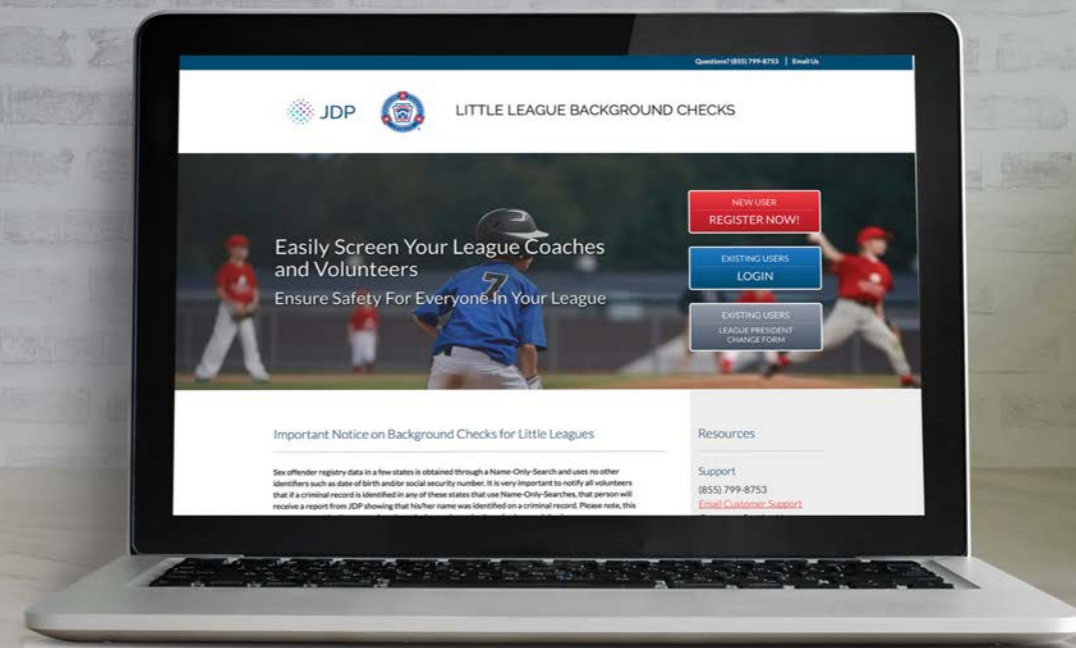
Chino (Calif.) American Little League
Cupertino (Calif.) Little League

JDP Handles Background Checks

In 2018, the 125 free background checks provided to local leagues from Little League® International were made available through a new provider, J.D. Palatine (JDP), which has access to more than 450 million records, including criminal records and sex offender registry records across all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The new JDP system also allows board members conducting the background checks to send a link to their volunteers to complete the Little League Volunteer Application online. A league board member can now enter the volunteer’s information, name and email address,

on the JDP website under “Quick App.” The system also allows the league volunteer to complete their own volunteer application, including the social security number. The Little League Volunteer Application is tied with the background check and can be viewed on the leagues JDP Portal. All leagues still must verify the volunteer’s application with a government-issued photo ID. Free online JDP tutorials are available to help local league and district officials become familiar with completion of the background check process and offers user support.





Barbara Bush, and her husband, the 41st President of the United States George H.W. Bush, had been Little League supporters for decades. For more than 60 years, Little League and the Bush family have crossed paths many times.

"The entire Bush family has been great friends and strong supporters of the Little League program for many years. Mrs. Bush, like millions of women around the world, was a dedicated Little League volunteer, where she served as a team mom and scorekeeper while her husband coached a team in Midland, Texas. Love of her family and service to her community, whether it be through a Little League program or in her role as First Lady, were the attributes that made her so special. On behalf of the entire Little League International family, I extend our deepest condolences to Mrs. Bush's family and her many, many friends."

Stephen D. Keener
Little League International President and CEO

Little League® thanks its sponsors and partners who supported our 2018 efforts

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DICK'S
SPORTING GOODS.

MUSCO
Lighting

In Memoriam

Bill Hyman
Former Illinois District 6
Umpire-In-Chief,
Little League Baseball World Series
February 2018

Tom Waclawski
Little League World Series usher
for 50 years
February 2018

Travis Hough
League President, Saydel LL,
Des Moines, Iowa
March 2018

Augie Garrido
University of Texas Head Coach/
ESPN SW Region
Baseball Commentator
March 2018

Gary Scales
Former Alabama District 6
Administrator
March 2018

Robin Carey
Little League Softball World Series
player (2016 and 2017)
March 2018

Eddie Greatorex
Former Massachusetts 9 District
Administrator
March 2018

Gregg Quedewit
Maryland District 2 Administrator
April 2018

Former First Lady Barbara Bush
Little League Volunteer
April 2018

Billy Connors
LLBWS champion, former MLB pitcher
and coach
June 2018

Regina Strickland
Oregon 1 D.A. and served as the
LLSBWS Director for one year (1994)
July 2018

Glen Feibig
Pennsylvania District 10 Administrator
August 2018

Gary Pate
Former Texas District 18 Administrator
August 2018

Jud Rogers
Former LLI Senior Marketing
Executive
September 2018

David Murphy
Texas 2 A.D.A.; LLB World Series
umpire (2005)
September 2018

Partners

MLB

PLAY BALL

ESPN

2017-18 **LITTLE LEAGUE®** YEAR IN REVIEW



LittleLeague.org