

# A Winning Team Making Life Better for Children



share with a child®





Volunteers of America is a national, nonprofit human services organization providing local human service programs and opportunities for individual and community involvement. Volunteers of America helps more than 1.8 million people a year including children and youth, the elderly, the disabled, homeless families and individuals, and many others. ([www.VolunteersofAmerica.org](http://www.VolunteersofAmerica.org)).

Major League baseball players care about kids. In 1996, the members of the Major League Baseball Players Association created the Players Trust, a 501(c)(3), charitable foundation. The foundation became the first of its kind in professional sports, established and administered by the players ([www.bigleaguers.com](http://www.bigleaguers.com)).

The Share With A Child partnership was created in 2002 with the important focus of promoting the nurturing and well-being of America's children. The partnership features the personal involvement of Major League baseball players and their families with youth programs conducted by Volunteers of America local offices throughout the United States.

*The smell of hot pancakes in the morning.*



*The exhilaration of almost touching  
the trees on a red swing set.*



*The happy squeals of children on a playground.*



Joys like these and many others were brought  
to hundreds of children through grants given by  
the Major League Baseball Players Trust  
to Volunteers of America programs.

The grant winners came from around the country,  
but the common goal of all the programs  
was making life better for children.

Grant recipients were asked to  
report on how the money  
from the Players Trust  
had an impact.

*The stories follow.*

# Innovative, Better Medical Care

*Rochester, N.Y.*



**The Volunteers of America Children's Center** in Rochester, N.Y., saw a need and stepped in to address it. The center, which provides daily care to more than 260 children that live in low-income households, wanted an easy, less time consuming method of giving health care to children.

With that goal in mind, the center partnered with the University of Rochester Golisano Children's Hospital to provide a service called "Health-e-Access" Telemedicine. The service enables doctors at the hospital to examine children and diagnose illnesses using high-tech computer equipment and data transmitted via the Internet. Telemedicine helps

to meet a critical need at the center, where the majority of the children served are from single-parent households in which the parent is moving from welfare to work, is working a minimum wage job, and is struggling to make ends meet. Most of the parents work in "entry-level" positions and cannot easily leave their jobs to take their children to a clinic.

Telemedicine enables children to be seen and diagnosed by a pediatrician without parents having to leave their jobs.

The grant from the Major League Baseball Players Trust helps pay for a specially trained nurse and DSL Internet line, which are both vital to the program's success.

# Hot, Nutritious Meals

*Allentown, Pa.*



Turning batter into golden brown pancakes is a piece of cake for the cook at the **Volunteers of America Children's Center** in Allentown, Pa. Thanks to the grant from the Major League Baseball Players Trust, the center installed a new commercial electric range/oven combination large enough to

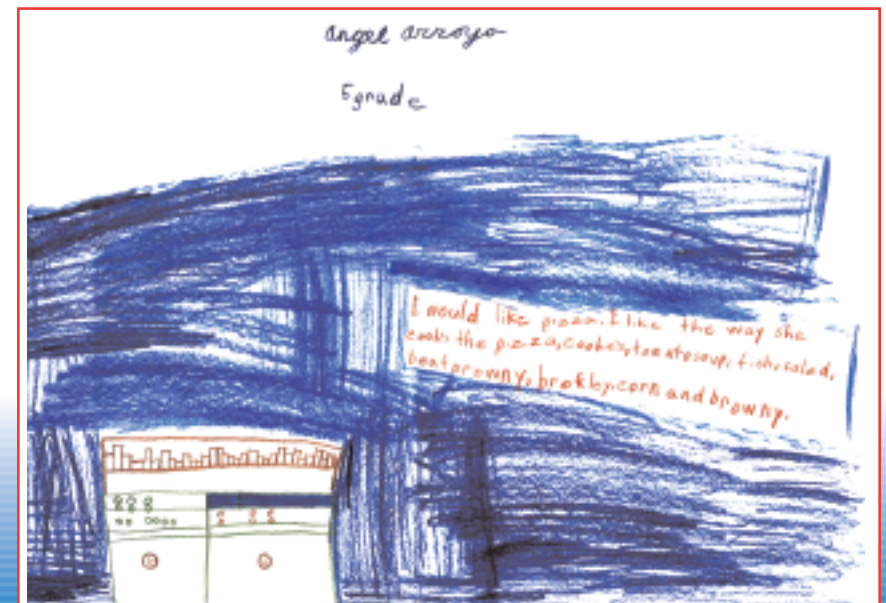
handle the growing demand at the center.

Each month, the center serves nearly 2,800 breakfasts, 3,200 lunches, and 3,200 snacks to about 150 children ages 13 months to 10 years old. Most involve using the new oven/stove. The old oven was not maintaining constant temperatures,



making baking as challenging as guessing if the next pitch will be a fastball or slider. The old stovetop's heating elements, like batters past their prime, were not always hot.

"The grant from the Trust hit a homerun for our center's children," said Dolores Swavely, director of the center.



# Day Care for Working Parents

*Portland, Ore.*



With the grant from the Major League Baseball Players Trust, Volunteers of America in Oregon began the **Homeruns for Families program**. The two-phase project's goal is to assist parents in paying for child care while also providing education on financial matters.

From December 2003 and May 2004, 87 percent of

the scholarship dollars provided by the trust were awarded to families to help them pay for child care at Volunteers of America's state-licensed Child Development Center. During the next six months of the program, parents will be given training on such topics as budgeting, saving money, and cost cutting.

By providing financial assistance to families, coupled with educating them on financial matters, Volunteers

of America in Oregon hopes to plant a seed of lasting financial stability for these families.

# A New, Safe Playground

*Columbus, Ohio*



Life has just gotten a bit sweeter for some children in Columbus, Ohio. Through the grant from the Major League Baseball Players Trust, Volunteers of America in Columbus, Ohio, was able to build a safe play area for families living in 12 apartment units served by the organization's Family Services

program. The program provides permanent supportive housing to families with disabilities such as mental health problems, alcohol and drug use, physical disabilities, and emergency shelter housing for families. Annually, more than 150 families living in 57 scattered-site apartment units are served.



**The Playground for Supportive Housing Families** project included the purchase, construction, and installation of playground equipment along with a grill, picnic tables, and benches for increased family time. Prior to the project, the nearest playground was one-half mile away from the housing units, requiring the children to treacherously cross

two busy thoroughfares. About 15 volunteers assisted with the construction of the play area.

Now the children not only have new playground, but families have an increased sense of ownership as they develop supportive relationships, become better neighbors, and take on greater interest in their property.

# A Better Place to Live

## *Jersey City, N.J.*

“Home Sweet Home,” took on a new meaning for the residents of **Respite I**, one of two emergency youth shelters operated by Volunteers of America of Greater New York. Forty to 50 children a year call Respite I home. The shelter is located in a large, single-family home built in the early 1900s.

In the spring of 2003, Volunteers of America staff and the New Jersey Bureau of Licensing identified several safety concerns that required immediate attention. Some of the repairs included: renovating the second floor bathroom; repairing the exterior steps, columns, and banister; painting the house exterior; and repairing the roof.

Funding for these items was not covered in the shelter’s contract with the state, so a grant from the Major League Baseball Trust helped to cover the expense of these repairs. With the generous grant, renovations on the second floor bathroom and repaired pipe damage have been completed. Repairs to the exterior steps will be made.

“The children feel proud of their repaired home. Their self-esteem and self-respect increased because they know we care about their safety,” said Robert Jefferson, service director, Respite I.



*Robert Jefferson, Service Director, Respite I*



# Learning About Clean Teeth

*San Bernardino, Calif.*



“Say Cheese,” is a now a more popular phrase in San Bernardino, Calif. Children are smiling wider than ever because of **Volunteers of America of Southwest California’s oral health-care program.**

Through a partnership with Community Health Systems, Volunteers of America provides oral health education and dental care to families. The children range in age

from 6 months to 5 years old. Eligible children from Volunteers of America’s Early Head Start Program have received free dental screenings, treatment referrals, and tooth sealants to prevent tooth decay.

The grant received from the Major League Baseball Players Trust allowed the program to thrive and flourish. During the next six months, monthly

educational workshops will be offered to parents enrolled in the program. Each workshop will focus on a different oral health issue, and workshop materials will assist parents in implementing oral health measure in their homes. This fall, dental interns from local dental schools will meet with participating parents in their homes to support and

reinforce positive oral health practices.

This unique program is assisting in the reduction of childhood tooth decay, a primary cause of chronic infections and illnesses in children under 5 years old, according to the Surgeon General’s Report on Oral Health in 2000.

# A New Beginning for Mothers and Children

*Indianapolis, Ind.*



Everyone deserves a second chance, and organizers in Indiana are seeing to it that several women take a swing at a fresh start. In September 2004, Volunteers of America in Indiana opened its third residential facility, **Theodora House**. The facility is for women transitioning from prison and jail to their communities. Within

Theodora House, a unique family reunification program called Healing Families is implemented, anchored by a visitation center known as **Kids Korner**.

Kids Korner provides female residents the opportunity for one-on-one visits and other bonding activities with their children in a homelike

atmosphere. The Kids Korner, with the grant from the Major League Baseball Players Trust, is furnished with a kitchenette, complete with high chairs and booster seats; cushy living room furniture, such as couches,

loveseats, and rocking chairs; and bookshelves, toys, books, and games for children of all ages. Kids Korner allows mothers and their children to spend extended time together in safe and supervised environment.

# Helping Kids Play the Game of Life

*New Orleans, La.*



With help from the Major League Baseball Players Trust grant, **the Lighthouse** relocated in April 2004 from a small, donated house serving 25 children, to a facility on Odile Davis Playground, and now serves more than 70 students. Girls are enrolled in the program for the first time, and they fit right in. Family members are not only required to be active participants, but have also proven be eager to participate and promote the program's mission.

The purpose of the Lighthouse is to provide a safe, nurturing environment where caring adult mentors help children develop the skills they need to become productive and self-sufficient members of our community. Based on community needs, Volunteers of America in Greater New Orleans offers free services and strives through after-school and summertime activities to achieve three basic goals: increase academic performance; increase parental



involvement in children's academic and social activities; and develop strength of character for the children, ages 5 to 10 in grades kindergarten to fifth grade, who attend the Lighthouse.

The program recognizes the lack of male involvement in the children's lives and uses the mentoring and recreational activities to ensure that the children have consistent and positive adult role models.

The most visible portion of the Lighthouse is the sports and athletic skills curriculum; this year's baseball season opener was packed. The baseball program does more than capture and retain participants. The baseball field is where the mentoring relationships are forged. Children experience the taste of success and become more confident as they develop more athletic coordination and skill. Their desire to feel victorious motivates them, both on and off the field.

# A New Playground on the Plains

*Lewellen, Neb.*



“Home on the Range,” takes on new meaning for Volunteers of America in Western Nebraska. Instead of the place “where the deer and antelope play,” children’s laughter and joy is heard throughout the new playground at the **Chappell**

**Childcare Center.** The old equipment did not meet state licensing requirements and had to be removed. New playground equipment was purchased with the grant from the Major League Baseball Players Trust. The project was completed in

June with the help of 14 volunteers spending the time putting the playground equipment together and unloading gravel. The redesigned playground is now

open for the 45 children, ages 6 weeks to 12 years old, enrolled in the center’s day care, preschool, after-school, summer camp, and head start programs.

# Helping Kids Start to Read

*Everett, Wash.*



Volunteers of America Western Washington's **Earning by Learning Summer Reading Program** has resources for a child's mind, body, and spirit. The program was almost cut short until the organizers received a grant from the Major League Baseball Players Trust. More than 100 children are currently benefiting from the program.

The program, in a partnership with three elementary schools located in low-income neighborhoods, reaches out to children during their summer break, providing a positive five-week literacy, social skill building program. Activities include children reading independently, with their parents, and with community volunteers while earning \$2 for every book completed. Children



also participate in a variety of literacy-based arts, crafts, and games.

A teacher reviews the reading level test scores of each child and administers a pre-test that shows the students attitude toward reading. A file is kept for each child, tracking the books successfully read.

At the end of the five weeks, another reading level evaluation and attitude survey will be conducted. Results will be analyzed and placed in the child's official school file. A celebration will be held for each child's achievement at an all school assembly in the fall.

# A Safe Play Area for Tots

*Chula Vista, Calif.*



“Out with old, and in with the new,” was an anthem for the young residents of a Chula Vista, Calif., apartment community. The grant from the Major League Baseball Players Trust made it possible for children living at Palomar Apartments

to play on a safe, new playground. **Palomar Apartments** is an affordable family housing community owned and managed by Volunteers of America. The community is home to 168 families. The Tot Lot, which serves



children under the age of 6, had equipment that was more than 30 years old. New equipment was installed on the playground to the delight of the

residents. “The toddlers of Palomar Apartments are enjoying their new playground,” said the apartment manager.

# 2004 Grant Winners

*More wonderful stories  
to look forward to next year...*

## **Fit Body, Bright Future** **Minneapolis, Minn.**

Volunteers of America of Minnesota's Children's Residential Treatment Center will develop a fitness program for girls at the center. The facility, which provides intensive mental health services, seeks to improve health, self-esteem, and body image of the girls and enforce a long-term healthy lifestyle. **This grant will help purchase exercise equipment for a fitness program for girls.**

## **Mentoring Homeless Children** **Sandusky, Ohio**

Volunteers of America of Northwest Ohio is starting Jump Start, a program to provide mentoring, art and education guidance to children at Crossroads, a transitional housing program for homeless families. Homeless children tend to fall behind academically, and this program will secure strong education support and creative outlets for them. **This grant will provide equipment and supplies for homeless children.**

## **Activities for At-Risk Youth** **Spokane, Wash.**

Volunteers of America of Spokane hopes to maintain and increase recreational activities provided by Crosswalk, a multi-service center for runaway and homeless youth, and youth in the Transitional Living Program. **This grant will provide more sports and play equipment, and cover event expenses for the youth.**

## **A Running Start for Change** **Lafayette, La.**

Volunteers of America of Greater Baton Rouge is starting the Juvenile Day Program in Lafayette, La. The physical education program strives to enhance education and prepare the youth to compete with other school league sports teams. This program is the "last chance" for juveniles before a recommendation for incarceration. **This grant will provide funds for sports equipment for juveniles.**

## **After-School Fun** **Hayward, Calif.**

Volunteers of America's Lord Tennyson Apartments complex is preparing to create an after-school and out-of-school program for latch key children through a partnership with Camp Fire USA. The 400-unit, multi-family affordable housing community has space and staff available for the endeavor. **This grant will provide training and curriculum to implement a community family club.**

*Thank you Major League Baseball Players Trust!*









Volunteers  
of America®

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*There are no limits to caring.®*