



Mayors Play Ball

A partnership between Major League Baseball and the United States Conference of Mayors

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On June 20, 2015, Major League Baseball (MLB) and the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) launched a new “Play Ball” initiative, which focuses on the sport of baseball and encourages sustained participation in the sport for years to come. “Play Ball” serves as a platform to connect with those who are currently involved in the game, while also providing alternative ways in for those looking to get involved, with a specific focus on youth participation.

From April to September of 2019, with the help of mayors across the country, “Play Ball” events will be held with the goal of energizing communities and generating support and love for baseball and softball. To increase the mayoral youth impact, we are encouraging mayors to consider hosting mayoral events with their local Boys and Girls Clubs.

Mayors can engage citizens, families and their respective city departments to organize individual and community “Play Ball” events. These mayoral events not only create a renewed sense of enthusiasm for the game, but also serve as an opportunity to strengthen family and community bonds. Mayors are encouraged to request Play Ball incentive t-shirts and banners for mayoral events.

The 2018 Play Ball Summer was the most successful one to date. That year, the number of cities and mayors engaged with Play Ball increased, along with the number of youth engaged in Play Ball activities to 36,246 youth. Moreover, 2018 marked two landmark achievements in that more than 300 mayors from all 50 states officially took the pledge to “Play Ball”.

The 2018 program year launched at the 86th annual Winter Meeting when Major League Baseball Commissioner Robert D. Manfred, Jr. announced the renewal of the Play Ball partnership with USCM. Shortly after this announcement, it was time to celebrate MLB Opening Day with ‘Claim the Crown’, where Mayors sent in pictures donning their favorite team’s hat, which they received courtesy of MLB and New Era. Next came the 86th Annual Meeting in Boston. It was here that Red Sox World Champion Keith Foulke had the opportunity to speak and pose with Mayors for special USCM baseball card pictures.

There were plenty of new cities that celebrated Play Ball in 2018, some of which held events in conjunction with MLB and the MLB Players Alumni Association. Another new aspect of the 2018 initiative was the collaboration with Boys and Girls Clubs of America, who assisted mayors by hosting and providing additional youth participants for mayoral events.



Major League Baseball Commissioner Robert D. Manfred, Jr. addressed the USCM 86th Winter Meeting, and announced a three-year renewal of the Play Ball partnership between USCM and Major League Baseball.

When a USCM member city registers their Play Ball event, they are provided with commemorative Play Ball shirts and banners, which can be displayed at their event. (Hanover Park, IL 2018 event)

A UNIQUE APPROACH TO PLAY BALL

Play Ball is about more than simply teaching youth about the proper skills and terminology of baseball and softball. It's also about stressing the importance of lessons that can be taught in emotional, social and physical development. One city, Carrboro, North Carolina, took a different approach to Play Ball in the summer of 2018. Carrboro Mayor Lydia Lavelle posed a question to local youth: "What does baseball/ softball mean to you?" Youth then submitted writing samples answering this prompt, with three winners in different age brackets (elementary, middle and high school) being chosen and rewarded with tickets to a Durham Bulls game. In addition, they were introduced to the community at a local Board meeting.

ILLINOIS MUNICIPALITIES PARTICIPATING

Illinois has 14 municipalities that have taken the Play Ball pledge:

- Addison
- Champaign
- Chicago
- Dolton
- Fillmore
- Glendale Heights
- Hanover Park
- Hoffman Estates
- Lisle
- Normal
- Orland Park
- Quincy
- Schaumburg
- Springfield

If you would like to participate in the the USCM Play Ball program, please use the following links for more information:

To take the Play Ball Pledge:
<http://legacy.usmayors.org/playball/pledge.asp>

To register your Play Ball event:
<http://legacy.usmayors.org/playball/register.asp>

To download a toolkit:
http://www.usmayors.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/19Mayors_PLAY-BALL_Booklet_3_10rdcd.pdf

CAPS ON MLB OPENING DAY

More than 315 mayors signed up by MLB Opening Day 2019 for Caps On MLB Opening Day. Caps On was celebrated by mayors, who wore their favorite team caps and shared their support of the game of baseball with constituents on a variety of social media platforms.



Hanover Park Mayor Rod Craig



Hoffman Estates Mayor William McLeod



Dolton Mayor Riley Rogers