

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CLEVELAND INDIANS INTRODUCE “PLAYBALL! CLE” PRESENTED BY OHIO 529; INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT YOUTH BASEBALL & SOFTBALL IN GREATER CLEVELAND

Eight leagues will join PlayBall! CLE in its pilot year

CLEVELAND, OH – The Cleveland Indians today announced the establishment of “PlayBall! CLE” presented by Ohio 529 – an initiative of Cleveland Indians Charities that will provide financial support to underserved baseball and softball organizations throughout Greater Cleveland.

As an organization, the goal of PlayBall! CLE is to improve the quality of the youth baseball and softball experience, provide access and opportunity for youth, and ensure leagues/organizations are applying consistent best practices.

“We are really excited to rethink our youth baseball and softball involvement in Northeast Ohio,” Cleveland Indians Vice President of Communications and Community Impact, Curtis Danburg said. “With this new initiative, we will be able to serve more leagues, more than doubling the number of kids we are supporting, while providing educational and financial resources to grow our game among Greater Cleveland youth.”

In order to receive support through the Cleveland Indians Charities, leagues/organizations must first fill out a grant application where they must be able to meet the following criteria:

- Accessibility (access to all kids and abilities, financial assistance, etc.)
- Coach/volunteer development
- Registration platform
- Safety (background checks, pitch count guidelines, concussion training, etc.)

Eight leagues have been selected as PlayBall! CLE approved leagues for the pilot year of the program in 2021: Tri-League Little League, B Buzz Baseball League, Near West Recreation, West Denison Baseball Leagues, Inc., Empower Sports, Achievement Centers for Children, Miracle League of Northeast Ohio and the Baseball Heritage Museum’s Buckeyes Baseball Club.

Empower Sports (Adaptive Softball Program), Achievement Centers for Children (Adaptive Baseball Program) and Miracle League of Northeast Ohio are all organizations that offer adaptive baseball and softball leagues for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Tribe starter LHP **LOGAN ALLEN** will be involved with the Miracle League of Northeast Ohio via his t-shirt initiative “What Handicap?”.

“Having the BHM Buckeyes Baseball Club be part of the inaugural year of the PlayBall! CLE program is another step in creating a meaningful partnership between the Baseball Heritage Museum and the Cleveland Indians organization,” Director of Baseball Activities, Baseball Heritage Museum/BHM Buckeyes Baseball Club, Jay Murphy said. “Our goals are the same, creating ways to engage young people to play the great game of baseball. Being part of the program will provide a valuable resource for both parties in continuing efforts to encourage children of Northeast Ohio to be involved with this game.”

Additional support will be granted to leagues/organizations based on how many enhanced criteria items they are operating. Funds granted to leagues and organizations are intended to go towards uniforms, equipment, trophies, administrative support, field/umpire fees and league fees.

PlayBall! CLE approved leagues may also be eligible for additional benefits, including the use of Indians logos on league website, marketing materials and uniforms, recognition on the Indians website and social media platforms, exclusive access to PlayBall! CLE events during the summer, preferred pricing and discounts on equipment and uniforms, access to coaches/parent training seminars through Positive Coaching Alliance and access to a PlayBall! CLE Day at Progressive Field.



"Near West Recreation is excited to be one of the first PlayBall! CLE recreation leagues! Being part of PlayBall! CLE will give us some new opportunities to not only increase the number of kids playing baseball and softball, but also improve the quality of play in our leagues with improved coach's trainings, better equipment and other family-friendly baseball activities."

Applying to become a Play Ball! CLE approved league is free, and the application for the 2022 program will be available in fall 2021.

For more details and on the Play Ball! CLE initiative, visit
www.mlb.com/indians/community/playballcle

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About Tri-League Little League

Tri-League Little League youth baseball and softball was founded in 1974 by local community leaders, with the goal to better our immediate neighborhood. Now, almost 50 years later Tri-League is still going strong and the only youth baseball and softball organization in Cleveland to be affiliated with Little League International! This all new affiliation for a traditional local recreation program, is offering our youth better opportunities and structure. Our youth simply deserve the kind of program we are building and all the opportunities, and competition we are providing.

About Baseball Heritage Museum Buckeyes Club Travel Baseball Program

The philosophy of the Baseball Heritage Museum Buckeyes Club Travel Baseball Program is to ensure that all participants have an opportunity to develop baseball skills in a competitive environment with an emphasis on fundamentals and having fun. All teams will participate in a competitive baseball league along with selected baseball tournaments. Each team member will be provided with the opportunity to improve skills through positive reinforcement and constructive baseball instruction. All members of the BHM Buckeyes travel team program will display sportsmanship and handle themselves in a proper manner that is becoming of a baseball player and coach. The goal at all levels is to improve, advance and for each participant to continue to play in the years to come!

About BBuzz Baseball League

The B Buzz Baseball League has enriched the lives of young people in the Lee-Harvard and surrounding communities for over 50 years. This American pastime and community sport has also united neighbors and created lifelong friendships between past B Buzz alumni.

B Buzz Baseball League has a mission that is committed to the personal and athletic development of all its players. The league does not simply focus on the fundamentals of the game, like team play and leadership attributes, but through its broader purpose, the league provides wrap-around community resource services and opportunities for everyone involved.

Since our re-establishment in 2015, and becoming a 501c3 non-profit organization, the league has partnered with community organizations, social service programs, summer library reading programs and many more initiatives to better prepare our players for a brighter future.

About Near West Recreation

Formed in 2013, Near West Recreation is a year-round recreation league that offers affordable programming for kids and families on the Near West Side of Cleveland. The league was created through a partnership between Ohio City Incorporated, Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization, Tremont West Development, and Metro West Development Organization, with the goal of providing high-quality local recreation options to families, connecting families to local resources, and activating local parks. The league operates on a sliding-scale system, with need-based financial assistance available to participants, making it accessible to all.

Currently, Near West Recreation offers basketball, lacrosse, baseball, softball, track, soccer, and volleyball to kids ages 4-18. All Near West Recreation programs and leagues have the same three focus priorities. 1) Kids have fun! 2) Kids are safe. 3) Kids are learning the game and improving their skills.

About West Denison Baseball Leagues, Inc.

West Denison Baseball Leagues began in 1955 when a few men organized a team of 28 boys who played alternately in whatever pickup games they could schedule. We have grown significantly over the years and with programming halted in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, we look forward to celebrating our 65th Season in 2021. We are a non-profit organization run solely by volunteers. We offer a full summer (May through July) of athletic activity which includes the following:

- Coed Tee Ball for children ages 4 – 6
- Coed Coach Pitch for children ages 7 – 9
- Baseball for boys ages 10 – 18
- Fastpitch Softball for girls ages 10 – 18

We aspire to be an outstanding educational athletic organization that provides a high-quality experience to every athlete. Our organization is built on the foundation of our values – 1st Character, 2nd Family, 3rd Community and 4th, our Home Base of Sportsmanship. We are committed to creating a positive culture in which coaches, parents, fans, officials and athletes work together to achieve our mission. Our league directors, board members and coaches are committed to our neighborhood and proving a safe, healthy and outstanding program to the children and families of our community.

About Achievement Centers for Children

We are a Cleveland, Ohio based non-profit organization providing support, services and programs that help children and adults with a wide range of physical, emotional, neurological, or developmental disabilities achieve their full potential in life. Comprehensive services to children and adults with disabilities and their families are



provided through [education and autism services](#), [therapy](#) and our [Intensive Therapy Clinic](#), [family support](#), [recreation](#), adult day services and [adapted sports](#). [Charitable donations](#) help to provide many of these critical services for families, regardless of their ability to pay.

In Fiscal Year 2019-2020, 97% of clients receiving services at the Achievement Centers for Children achieved or partially achieved their individualized goals, including improved functional skills (crawling, walking, talking), increased academic achievement, and improved social/emotional development (interacting with peers, managing stress, coping with a disability). Learn more at www.achievementcenters.org.

About Empower Sports

Empower Sports is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization committed to providing sports and exercise programs for children and adults with various physical and cognitive disabilities and additional programs for typically-developing kids. We value diversity, relationships, service, and empathy.

To put it simply, we are sports junkies. We grew up playing the games we love, and now as dedicated professionals we are working to provide those opportunities to those in need while fostering relationships between individuals of diverse backgrounds.

Programs emphasize socialization skills, self-esteem, teamwork, discipline and (most importantly) HAVING FUN!

About Miracle League of Northeast Ohio

The Miracle League of Northeast Ohio was officially formed in September of 2012 with the creation of a board of directors. The board of directors is tasked with running the league and maintaining our facilities. Our Medina Lions Field at Sam Masi Park is located at 812 Gates Mills Blvd in Medina. We currently have 112 children and adults with special needs playing baseball at Sam Masi Park. Our field is a safe, welcoming place for players, parents, & friends.

Come and play!
Come and cheer!
Come and experience the **MIRACLE!**