

For Immediate Release

Re Opening Day for Galveston Little Leaguers

Galveston, Texas – March 28, 2009 – Not many folks in the Galveston area were thinking about baseball last September when Hurricane Ike pounded the community with storm surge from the Gulf and 120mph winds and rain. Yet six months after that storm altered the landscape of Galveston, Little Leaguers all around the region are kicking off their season thanks to the fortitude and spirit of countless volunteers and the generosity of a non-for-profit charity from the Philadelphia area called Pitch In For Baseball®.

Late in 2005 Pitch In For Baseball joined forces with Little League International to assist Gulf Coast families and leagues affected by the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. When Hurricane Ike came ashore in 2008, Pitch In For Baseball took action. “It was clear to us from the start that the Little League community in Galveston was a special group of people,” said David Rhode, Executive Director of Pitch In For Baseball. “We told them that whatever their equipment needs were we would do our best to get them what they needed to play ball in the spring of 2009.”

However, the damage was so extensive and impacted so many leagues that understanding the totality of the baseball recovery was a complicated task. Some leagues lost their fields, fencing and lighting. Almost all leagues suffered massive losses in their equipment rooms. This is where a Little League volunteer with an extensive military background took over. District Administrator, Charlie Sweetin has responsibility for the leagues in the Galveston Gulf Coast area. “Our league presidents from Galveston Island, Galveston West Isle, Hitchcock, La Marque, League City Seabrook, San Leon, Santa Fe, Texas City and Baytown committed to having a season in 2009. It was simply a matter of understanding what each league needed and then trying to find some way to fill those needs.”

What they didn't count on was a friend they've never met from over 1,500 miles away stepping in to join their team. “When Pitch In For Baseball contacted us in October to see how they could help, it gave us a tremendous feeling of hope,” said Sweetin. “The equipment they promised us gave us confidence in realizing our dream to have Opening Day on schedule in the coming spring.”

As promised, the equipment showed up...over 1 ton of equipment. There were pallets of batting helmets, baseballs, catcher's gear, bats, batting tees and equipment bags. There were even score books and coaching DVD's. Local volunteers sorted the donated items and got them distributed to their respective leagues and coaches in time for the start of practice in February.

” We couldn’t have made a donation of this scale without the generous support of passionate baseball fans around the country who believe in our mission,” said Rhode. Anyone wishing to support the ongoing relief effort in Galveston can donate equipment or make a financial donation online through the Pitch In For Baseball website at www.pitchinforbaseball.org.

Much work still needs to be done. Lighting, fencing, score boards and other high ticket items are still on the shopping list for many of the area programs. But for the kids about to taking the field around the Galveston Gulf Coast area, this Opening Day will be one to remember.

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About Pitch In For Baseball

Since 2005, Pitch In For Baseball has delivered over 80,000 pieces of equipment and uniforms impacting over 60,000 children in need. Donations have assisted more than 100 communities in the United States and more than 50 countries worldwide. Pitch In For Baseball is a 501(c) 3 charity dedicated to improving the physical, social and emotional needs of children through the games of baseball and softball. Donations from individuals, leagues and manufacturers enable the charity to collect, organize and redistribute equipment and uniforms to children in underserved communities worldwide. Financial and equipment donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. For more information visit www.pitchinforbaseball.org.

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