

LEGACY

Legacy Spotlight: Justin Barnett, West Side Grade Control Specialist

Organization Name: Little League Challenger Baseball, Lake Zurich, IL division

Mission of Organization: Our organization aims to allow children of all capabilities to enjoy the great sport of baseball. Regardless of handicap, whether mental or physical, our buddy-ball style of play allows the players to take part in the game in a way that best suits them. Our organization promotes teamwork, sportsmanship, communication, community, fun and helping others. The Little League Challenger Division—which is part of the National Little League organization—began in 1989, but the local Challenger program in Lake Zurich Baseball began in 2014. I have been with the LZ program since its inception.

What is your current role with the organization and how did you get involved? I try to help out in any way possible, though my official role is the head manager / coach of the Cubs (one of six teams that are a part of our organization).

Why do you choose to support this organization? This organization was brought to my attention by a former coworker. He knew that I had played baseball from T-ball all the way up into high school, and that volunteering where and when I could means a lot to me. When the league was still in the planning phases and needed coaches, he reached out to me with the opportunity in which I immediately accepted. Some of my lifelong friends, most memorable stories and true life lessons came from my time playing baseball. Why would I not want to try and help someone else have those experiences?

What is the most rewarding part? There are a couple of rewarding parts about being a part of this organization.

First, is the kids. I have pretty much had the same team for the past 5 years and have been fortunate enough to watch them grow both athletically and personally. I get to watch them support each other and truly become a team, as well as friends. When I started, there were quite a few players that could not throw, catch or hit. Now, none of my players use the tee and all can throw and catch. It's great to see how happy they are when they are part of a play in the field or make a great hit.

The second part is watching the parents. I do my best to make sure the parents have to be involved as little as possible. I want them to just sit and enjoy watching and cheering on their children as they play. I know my parents loved watching me and my sister compete in all of our activities growing up, and I am trying to make sure these parents get that same opportunity.

Are there ways for your co-workers to get involved?

If anyone would like to be involved in my area's specific program, they are more than welcome to reach out to me directly at 847-833-0295.

What does LEGACY mean to you? Legacy is what you leave behind and how you are remembered. I think everyone should take the opportunity to make our world a better place.

