

2016 PLAY BALL REPORT

Here is the summary report on 2016 Play Ball Summer mayoral impact on youth engagement, as well as some examples of the innovative efforts mayors are using to share baseball with young people in cities across the nation.

The United States Conference of Mayor had a very successful summer with over 205 cities designated as 2016 Play Ball Cities this year. Similar to last year we had many cities issue Play Ball Summer proclamations and various mayors read them to local participants at their events.

Mayoral 2016 Play Ball Summer events held June through August has led to the engagement of over 20,405 youth from across the country.

Most events involved clinics with baseball skill stations where young athletes would learn how to run the bases, field ground balls and pop-ups, and learn throwing mechanics and batting techniques.

In cities like Columbia, SC, Kansas City, MO, and Hanover Park, IL mayors held play ball summer events in conjunction with the dedication of new and renovated baseball fields.

Many cities incorporated baseball activities and themes into community movie nights with mayoral led baseball tosses and fitness activities before the main event. Cities often had community members vote on the films shown, and used their events as a tool to promote the fun pastime of baseball, as well as the benefits of exercise.

Here are some examples of the innovative mayoral Play Ball Summer events:

USCM President Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett hosted an event around the NCAA Women's College World Series, which is held each year in Oklahoma City. The event was held at the Bricktown Ballpark (home to the AAA OKC Dodgers) and engaged over 200 kids, with a nice percentage of girl's softball players, thanks to the involvement of the American Softball Association staff. A combination of the venue (a Triple-A ballpark located in downtown/Bricktown OKC) and an assist from the Dodgers and ASA organization's, made this their most successful event to date. Oklahoma City held another Play Ball Event with 150 students at John Rex Elementary School, a charter school located in the heart of downtown OKC. In both events, Mayor Cornett helped run throwing, catching, batting and running drills.

USCM Vice President Columbia, SC Mayor Steve Benjamin, and 170 kids from the youth baseball league attended Play Ball Summer events held at the newly opened Spirit Communications Park, home of the Columbia Fireflies. The City of Columbia 12U and 10U All Star teams participated in the Baseball Buddies program at both events the

young athletes were recognized pre-game and joined the Fireflies players at their position for the national anthem.

Albuquerque, NM Mayor Richard Berry engaged youth: 18 to 24 years old as part of the city's JOB-READY-HIRE Program. The Program provides training, and connects qualified young adults to employers looking for talent. In partnership with the US Conference of Mayor's Play Ball initiative the Mayor used baseball activities to raise awareness of the benefits of the sport, as well as to help staff connect with the young people.

Manuel Figueiredo, Mayor of Union, NJ held a Vintage baseball themed festival with food, play and other baseball related activities. The event even featured an old school baseball game. The game was intended to celebrate the sport and its place in American history. The Union Farmers played the Elizabeth Resolutes, 15-4. The Resolutes are the first 19th-century-rules baseball club in New Jersey, and the only baseball club in New Jersey to play by the actual rules of the club they recreated. The Resolutes have helped to further 19th century baseball research by introducing 1870, '73, and '91 rules into regular match play.

Orange County Public Schools started a week earlier than usual this August, so **Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer** held his Play Ball Summer event during the after school program hours and dubbed the event *Welcome Back - Let's Knock this Year Out of the Park*. A total of 130 kids, 12 staff, and about 20 parents participated. The kids and staff participated in electronically simulated games played on both the Nintendo Wii and Xbox game systems. A live, mini baseball game was played between the 4th and 5th grade groups in a Girls Vs. Boys Homeroom Derby. The parents even got in on the action when they volunteered to participate in the Baseball Trivia Game. Everyone got to take home sporting memorabilia provided by The Tampa Bay Rays.

With two national laboratories based in the city, **Livermore, CA Mayor John Marchand** added math and science to their Play Ball Summer events. Play Ball Summer activities emphasized STEM related baseball postings, stats were shared on City Facebook page, Twitter, nextdoor.com and Instagram for the month of July. Baseball was the theme of the employee Safety Fair and BBQ. A popular activity held in July was the Baseball Craft Program on July 28, 2016 attracting **54 people**. Boys and girls made crafts that were inspired by the game and equipment of America's past time. Another highlight for the Play Ball activities on social media was "First Dog" Gatsby in Oakland A's hat for Caps On! The city received social media hits were a 3,200 reach, 223 clicks, and 184 shares – which was considered a highly liked post by a community this size!

Clarksville, TN Mayor Kim McMillan 2016 Play Ball Summer event was held during the annual Clarksville Sportsfest at Liberty Park. The event was followed by a movie in the park event, which showcased "A League of Their Own" movie, to coincide with the baseball theme. Over 150 citizens attended the movie. This event was instrumental in engaging individuals and families that focused on the sport of baseball. The activities

brought out the enthusiasm for the game of baseball and served to strengthen the family and community bonds.

Irvine Mayor, Dr. Steven Choi, held an event on Tuesday August 16th at Northwood Community Park. The event hosted around 165 participants. After welcoming remarks from our children participated in a clinic that focused on four different baseball themed drills. As a participation prize the city gave every child a baseball, so they could continue to play baseball on their own with their friends and family.