

PLAYING THE FIELD IN THE COMMUNITY:  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OF THE MLB AND HALL OF FAME

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## ABSTRACT

This research analyzes how Major League Baseball and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum impact the youth in their surrounding area through community engagement. Community engagement programs are chosen and measured based on their interactions, connections, the fostering of goodwill, and the development of relationships with the youth and the community. Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities, Be A Superior Example, and the recipients of the Roberto Clemente Award are chosen to represent the three types of programs studied. This research will observe the strengths and weakness to help determine the impact of each program. The success of each program is finally determined on whether the intended goals are met, by the growth of participants, the growth regarding area impacted, and the growth in opportunities. Interviews and MLB Community Reports find that Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities experiences the greatest increase in growth in every aspect of the program. However, the Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities growth results in not every city gaining the same influential experience. A greater connection is established in the smaller community engagement events, such as organization-led or individual-led programs. In the end, organizational-led programs are the most well-rounded and prominent. Organization-led programs involved in league-wide programs increase the likelihood of success for the larger programs. In addition, organizations motivate players and give players resources to form their own community engagement programs. Although the three programs differentiate in size, distance impacted, and their goals, the heroic outlook of the professional athletes used in every event made these programs successful in some shape or form.

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## **I. Introduction**

Recorded back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the beginning of “unprecedented exchange of people, goods, ideas, and culture” resulted in the first rise of community involvement (National Philanthropic Trust, 2016). Wealthy individuals voluntarily donated their time and goods to the less fortunate when they saw fit. An act that began associated with the church or state, developed into a deed contributed by unaffiliated, ordinary people. Throughout the next centuries, community involvement not only assisted the less fortunate, but transitioned to give these unfortunate people a voice in some circumstances.

Philanthropy began in Major League Baseball during the early 1900s. For example, baseball clubs raised money for victims of the *Titanic* in 1912 and “passing the hat” around to fans in between innings began in the 1940s to raise money for charities (Light, 2005, p. 179). Ball clubs even began forming clubs for youth in the surrounding area to help them watch the games. The facilities crew at stadiums drilled peep holes into the outfield to allow kids unable to afford a ticket into the stadium to support their home town team behind the walls.

By the 1960s, Pittsburgh Pirates outfielder, Roberto Clemente, became one of the first notable athletes to use his public exposure as way to give back through community involvement instead of monetary donations. He often flew back to Puerto Rico and other Latin American countries to bring scarce supplies and to mentor underprivileged kids in the area (Nathan, 2014). His actions influenced countless of other athletes and

professional sport leagues to create community engagement programs, in addition to their current monetary donation methods.

Roberto Clemente's fame through his performance on and off the field resulted in an unintended consequence. Clemente and his genuine personality gave hope to Latin Americans to make it to the major leagues in a sport where Latin Americans made up a portion of the minority group. In 2009, "29 percent of the players on the rosters of the 30 teams came from Latin American countries" (Marquwz, 2005, p. 102). Roberto Clemente is accredited for a portion of the rise in Latin American players, due to his community involvement in Latin American countries and the way his humble self served as a role model to all.

Focusing on Major League Baseball and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, I examined Community Reports, articles, and information from interviews to establish a better understanding on how professional sports teams and athletes positively impact the youth in their surrounding area through community involvement. These three programs vary in size and vary in their anticipated goals. The comparison of the number of participants and the results of the programs cannot accurately measure the programs' success against one another. Therefore, I will measure how well each program achieved their intended goals and the growth in participants, growth in opportunities, and growth in distance impacted from the start of each program to now to examine their success.

This thesis demonstrates the ways that community service events by athletes can bring awareness to issues within a city or to a specific demographic. The unique strengths and weaknesses experienced during the various sized programs will be examined determine areas of improvement for future community engagement programs. One

program in this study will represent the league-wide program, the next will represent an organization or a ball club led program, and the final program will depict an individual or a player led community service project.

Each program aims to improve the safety, to educate participants, and to increase opportunities for those in the targeted area. Yet, the programs become more autonomous and hit closer to home for the community engagement coordinators as the projects go from league-wide down to individual-led. In the end, the various forms of community engagement work towards creating a better future for the younger generation and the underprivileged.

League-wide community engagement programs often focus on creating a safer environment, educating, and financing the underprivileged to provide the community with resources for a better future. For example, Hank Aaron's Chasing the Dream Program funds underprivileged teenagers for them to fulfill their dream in any of the arts or in athletics (MLB, 2008, p. 7). To maximize the resources and support offered to everyone involved, the Boys and Girls club intertwines all of the league-wide programs. The Boys and Girls Club, "the official charity of Major League Baseball," helps the league-wide community engagement programs, like Chasing the Dream Program, prosper (Brasuell, Silva, & Vargas, 2003, p. 9). Because of the relationships formed between the programs, more and unique projects can be established.

Major League Baseball ball clubs and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, aim to improve any form of community issues presented to them. For example, the Chicago Cubs Diamond Project works on preserving green space around the city (Neil, 2016). In 2014, the St. Louis Cardinals donated over 240,000 tickets to their

surrounding area to motivate kids to excel in school or to do community service (Cardinals Care, 2002, p. 12). The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum uses their after-school program to teach history and math through baseball to the schools around Cooperstown, New York. Every organization organizes their own distinct program that fits perfectly with their community.

Lastly, programs established by individual athletes often improve problems associated with their personal values. For instance, many Latin American Major League Baseball players promote academic success and improve athletic equipment in areas around their home countries. The Chicago White Sox found that “many players extended this outreach to develop their own program close to their heart” (MLB, 2008, p. 9). Players were motivated to create their own community service events after participating in events put on by the White Sox. The Community Relations Department supported and assisted the players during the beginning of their community engagement program to make the process easier. Athletes enjoy giving back to the community that built them into the professional athlete that they turned into.

Between Major League Baseball and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, I chose three community engagement programs to study. Each program representing one of the three ways sports can support a community. First, the league-wide program that I will examine is Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI). The second program is Be A Superior Example (BASE) at the National Baseball Hall Fame and Museum. This will be a team or, in this instance, an organization initiated community engagement program. Finally, the third program will review past recipients of the



Roberto Clemente Award. This award will represent a program implemented by an individual.

I am asking two questions. First, how does the community involvement of Major League Baseball and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum impact youth in the surrounding area? Second, what are the strengths and weaknesses of each community engagement event?

By researching past literature, community reports, and by visiting the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum to interview their Education Department, I can answer these questions. The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum provided immense amounts of information in their world class library for the community outreach events put on by Major League Baseball. In addition, I received first-hand information regarding the Hall of Fame's programs for youth in the area by interviewing the Director of Education at the Hall of Fame and by becoming a certified superior example on [beasuperiorexample.org](http://beasuperiorexample.org).

## **II. Community Engagement**

For this study, community engagement will be defined as the process by which a sport team interacts, connects, and fosters goodwill in the community and develops lasting relationships with individuals and with the community. This will include, but not limited to, Major League Baseball and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum mainly concentrating on educating, financing, and building a safer environment for youth in the surrounding area of the program.

### **III. Why Athletes?**

Anyone can volunteer in the community, work for a non-profit, or even create a non-profit business of their own. No matter who coordinates and volunteers for the project, lives are changed and the work is forever appreciated. However, the more ordinary the community service coordinator, the longer it will take for the program to develop in the community and the harder it will be to make the non-profit successful in the long run.

Athletes can serve as much more than a Cy Young Award winner or as the season's Most Valuable Player. Per three sociologists, athletes can be viewed as 'social movement entrepreneurs.' The athletes' passion for improving a certain issue spreads around their targeted location and to leaders around the community, similar to what occurs with business entrepreneurs. They also stated, "the work of non-governmental actors in nonofficial capacities is key to . . . a crucial first step towards more formalized reconciliation work" (Wilson, Van Luijk, & Boit, 2015). Athletes are also considered a "non-governmental actor" and can spread light on issues in a community or can encourage more people to assist the underprivileged with them.

Taking advantage of their spot light, athletes use fame as a leverage for those who experience trouble getting their voices heard by officials. The San Diego Padres meet with "its Community Advisory Council" (SD Padres Community Relations Department, 2002, p. 6). Representatives from the Community Advisory Council come from all backgrounds in the community. By meeting with San Diego's Community Advisory Council on a regular basis, the Padres can improve and develop community outreach programs according to the discussions in the meetings.

Athletes were not paid millions of dollars until around twenty-five years ago. Because of this, athletes began contributing to charity by donating their time and efforts towards a cause instead of donating money. Mostly, they would go back to their hometown if they grew up in poor conditions or they would give back to their current ball club's community. The impact of players' abilities on and off the field creates a heroic outlook towards them. By making it to the big leagues and never forgetting their roots, the kids in the athlete's area will mimic every step of their idols as an attempt to reach the same level of success.

The title of athletes being called a "role model" or a "hero" can persuade and inspire children, teenagers, and parents to participate in the community event. These heroes wear a jersey instead of a cape and their super power is to create a safer environment through their fame and hard work instead of through superhuman strength. Someone a community can relate to or that symbolizes hope can motivate the community, as well as outside officials, to establish a better environment for others.

During the 1990s, baseball greats tarnished their heroic appearance by taking performance enhancing drugs. In addition, a strike occurred from August 1994-April 1995. The 1990s left a few black marks in Major League Baseball's history book. Luckily, "Cal Ripken Jr. . . entered the public consciousness as a tale of heroism" (Cowen, 2000, p. 64). What better way to save the fans in the baseball world than by Major League Baseball players stepping in as the role of the hero? Cal Ripken Jr. showed the baseball world that playing a clean game of baseball still existed. He kept fans focused on his path towards beating Lou Gehrig's most consecutively played games rather than the articles released regarding the players using performance enhancing drugs.

After his career ended, he continued to give back to his fans and the community by working in and creating a non-profit with his family.

The heroic outlook towards athletes can mend the wrong doings of other athletes. If a villain can be created, then a just as exceptional counterpart can be created. These “social movement entrepreneurs” continue to lead as examples for the ever-growing number of fans. Athletes create a sense of collective effervescence for fans at the ballpark and around their neighborhoods. These programs unify communities for people with different backgrounds and passions.

#### **IV. What Makes a Program Successful**

There is not a set guide to determine how influential a community engagement turns out to be. A community appreciates any sort of service done that improves at least one life, so which methods work best in each specific project measures the prominence of a program. My thesis only analyzes three community engagement programs in Major League Baseball and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum and they still present numerous differences between each other. The number of people involved, the distance impacted, and the opportunities generated varies between Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities, Be A Superior Example, and the involvement of the recipients of the Roberto Clemente Award dramatically.

While studying these three programs, the thesis measures the success of each community involvement program by observing the growth and the achievement of goals. First, the most important component when determining success is if the intended goals of a program is met. If the results of Be A Superior Example are similar to what their

description reads, then Be A Superior Example can be considered at least partially successful. Next, the growth of participants, opportunities generated, and the distance impacted is studied. Growths in any of the three areas is another mile marker towards success. Some of the community involvement events cannot sustainably manage a growth in participants or distance, so the opportunities are weighed heavier. Opportunities can always be found because this is the major way for program improvements.

Evaluating goals, participant growth, growth in distance impacted, and growth in opportunities will not expose all of the favorable outcomes produced by Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities, Be A Superior Example, and the recipients of the Roberto Clemente Award. Fortunately, this will bring light to numerous ways that they impact communities around the world and weaknesses that might exist.

## **V. Community Service Over Monetary Donations**

Major League Baseball athletes and teams began their philanthropic acts primarily through monetary donations. However, in the 1960s, Roberto Clemente demonstrated the power of assisting the individuals directly in the community. Monetary donations add improvements to the community; yet, the athletes that give back through community service are the ones that establish the stronger relationships with the people they interact with. Loyalty, bonds, and energy for future projects is built during community service projects.

Community service, in a way, is quid pro quo. Athletes often have access to better resources than their community and athletes are capable of giving their community a voice to shed light on community issues. Locals view athletes as a major asset to help

restore neighborhoods and to express concerns or innovative ideas. The support of athletes offered to the target neighborhoods motivates locals to support the athletes. In the end, the community service of athletes can unify a professional sports team with their city. The initial act develops benefits for both sides and provides an opportunity for both sides to educate each other about themselves.

For example, some of the most notable community service projects are implemented by the distinguished ball clubs. The St. Louis Cardinals has one of the most conspicuous community engagement programs with the widest array of people involved in it. Players and their wives visit local hospitals on a regular basis (Cardinals Care, 2008, p. 11). The Cardinals ball club educates parents, kids, and coaches in the community to create the Redbird Rookies League to construct a program beneficial for everyone. St. Louis umpires even started Blue for Kids to give underprivileged kids an opportunity to hang out with umpires prior to a game, and then to attend a St. Louis Cardinals game (Cardinals Care, 2008, p. 17). As a result of the multiple successful community engagement programs implemented by the Cardinals, the Cardinals has one of the best fan bases in Major League Baseball. A lot of their fan base is attributed to the Cardinals eleven world championships and the presence of some of the most winningest coaches in Major League Baseball history. However, during the tough times for the organization, the Cardinals relationship with the St. Louis community kept the fan base around. Furthermore, the Cardinals established programs to help educate youth in the area and to create better opportunities for the less fortunate.

## **VI. Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI)**

In 1989 John Young developed a youth baseball league in South Central Los Angeles. During this time, he observed countless youth in the inner city experiencing obstacles with space, recreational equipment, and unsafe environments. Gang activity and limited interactions from over worked parents restricted the options of what kids could do in their free time. Parks were sometimes hazardous from the gangs and it was difficult for kids to participate on a sports teams or in any sort of extracurricular activity on their own. John Young provided local youth an opportunity to participate in an affordable and accessible athletic program. For many, this community was an alternative to violence, drugs or delinquency. After two successful seasons of this league, Young officially generated the Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities(RBI) program with Major League Baseball in 1991(“RBI History,” 2017).

The original RBI league in South Central Los Angeles targeted boys between the ages of thirteen to sixteen. John Young saw this demographic as the most prone to enter the gang activity in their backyards and the ones that he could benefit the most. A couple of years after RBI became a recognized program in Major League Baseball, they partnered up with the Boys and Girls Club (Brasuell et al., 2003, p. 12). The already prospering Boys and Girls Club allowed RBI to spread to cities across the United States. Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities seeks out communities that they believe will benefit the most from RBI’s financial assistance. RBI’s funding goes towards, but is not limited to, creating fields for the players, setting up seminars to educate coaches for the league, and providing affordable equipment for the players and coaches.

In the beginning, RBI focused on creating a safe environment for kids to be active in and “to use participation in baseball as a means to overcome the academic and social disadvantages most inner city kids face” (Brasuell et al., 2003, p. 7). Kids were required to have good attendance in school to play in the RBI leagues. As resources increased, Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities continued to focus on the well-roundedness of the players by teaching more traits.

By 2010, RBI added softball leagues and organized a whole new age group that the program targeted. Five to twelve year old’s could join the Jr. RBI league and RBI extended their league to include teenagers up to the age of eighteen instead of sixteen. This motion expanded the age range of impoverished kids influenced by RBI from thirteen to sixteen year old’s to five to eighteen year old’s.

At the start of RBI, Young believed thirteen to sixteen year old’s would benefit the most from being a part of team and that they needed to understand the importance of receiving an education. Unfortunately, the involvement of only four age groups in the league leaves countless opportunities for the other age groups to travel down the wrong path. Kids younger than thirteen soak up an abundance of information exposed to them every day. It is difficult enough for them to retain everything they observe and hear, let alone attempting to determine what is right and wrong while they are at it. Who knows how many kids were lost to wrongful peer pressure or the life altering decisions that could have occurred before RBI was offered to them.

In addition, RBI removes seventeen and eighteen year old’s during a time that the teenagers have countless questions and make life altering decisions. “Do I go to college? How do I pay for college? Should I stay at home and support the family?” An average



teenager asks countless questions regarding whether to attend college or to find another career path. The teenagers in RBI asks even more considering they come from underprivileged families and unique backgrounds. Many of these teenagers have limited guidance and resources to use if they are considering college. Being a part of RBI might result in participants to choose a new and more beneficial career path than what others in their family traditionally took prior to them.

As years pass by, the number of leagues involved are not the only changes that occurred in RBI, the partnerships established also experienced a growth. RBI formed relationships with the MLB, the Boys and Girls Club of America, city parks, and recreation departments (Kihl, Babiak, & Tainsky, 2014). More and more assistance has been added to provide more resources. These were only the first of many collaborations created from 1991 to now.

Major League Baseball's support expanded to MLB ball clubs helping out as well. For example, even though the St. Louis Cardinals began building their own baseball diamonds and relationships in surrounding St. Louis neighborhoods, the organization donated \$200,000 in 2001 (Cardinals Care, 2001, p. 12). The 2001 Cardinals also assisted with training coaches. They made sure the coaches were not only taught the logistics of baseball, but they were taught the importance of teamwork and dedication and ways for these attributes to come about in players. Many ball clubs design little leagues and programs similar to RBI of their own in their town, such as the Diamond Project for the Chicago Cubs and Redbird Rookies for the St. Louis Cardinals. Yet, these ball clubs still support RBI in some shape or form.

In 1998, Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities players began to attend other MLB league-wide community outreach programs. Every year RBI picks the most highly talented players from their leagues to attend the USA Baseball Tournament of Stars (MLB, 2008, p. 13). The stands at the games for the tournament are filled with scouts, college coaches, and all sorts of recruiters. For some of the kids chosen by RBI to appear at the tournament, this is a once in a lifetime chance to go to college or to support their family's doing something they love. Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities covers all tournament expense for the players, so the chosen kids are never prevented from going to the tournament due to a lack in fees.

Furthermore, youth involved in RBI are given the opportunity to participate in "Wanna Play?" when Major League Baseball team in their area makes it to the World Series. Kids from RBI and the Boys and Girls Club are invited to the local ball club's stadium to participate in an activity packed clinic that stresses the importance of nutrition. In 2011, Youth Field at the Texas Rangers Ballpark in Arlington held the clinic and RBI and the Boys and Girls Club were recognized during Game 3 of the World Series (MLB, 2012, p. 30). As RBI becomes more developed and moves forward, possibilities for the players constantly appear and the MLB provides recognition to appreciate some of the notable players and coaches.

Twenty-eight years since the creation of RBI, Young's one league has developed into over 300 leagues in over 200 cities world-wide (MLB, 2012, p. 14). RBI's primary goal is to still create a safe environment for kids and teenagers to participate in outdoor activities and to help prepare them for the future on and off the diamond. For children

unable to join a RBI league, they can now attend a single day event sponsored by RBI in those same cities.

## **VII. Be A Superior Example (BASE)**

In Cooperstown, New York, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's Be A Superior Example (BASE) concentrates on promoting healthy life styles to minimize future mental and physical stress (S. Hazzard, personal communication, March 2017). Since 2011, BASE has focused on educating kids on four topics, or bases. The first base concentrates on fitness, second base is nutrition, third base is character, and home base teaches fair play.

BASE began as an interactive exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum for kids to participate at on field trips or when they attended the exhibit with their family. The exhibit allowed kids to walk around the bases as someone from the Hall of Fame's Education Department described real world practices that the kids could implement into their own lives. BASE quickly developed into a program that could be implemented virtually. People of all ages can now pledge to live a healthy lifestyle and to be superior examples to others by completing the program online or by attending one of the programs in person.

To take the pledge to live healthy lifestyle and to certified superior example through the virtual lesson on BASE's website, the user first must select "12 & under" or "12 & up." By selecting the appropriate age group, the lessons are altered in a way that best suites the user. Both selections are interactive to keep the user engaged, but the "12

& under” is completely digital and taught by a kid while the program for older users is taught by the Cardinals Ozzie Smith and other Hall of Famers.

The overall concept of first base is fitness. During this section, Hall of Famers, such as Hank Aaron, discuss the importance of listening to the body, giving it rest when it needs it, and that muscle mass is not everything when working on strength. Hank Aaron uses his physique as an example of being an all-time great in the athletic world and he was 6 feet tall and was not even close to breaking 200 lbs. He described how endurance, strength, agility, speed, flexibility, and mental toughness all need to be present to be successful. Only focusing on one of the six categories can damage the body or can limit an athlete’s potential to thrive in a sport. BASE then gives the users examples of what type of exercises will improve each category and helps the person create a weekly balanced workout routine.

At second base, athletes learn about nutrition. Other athletes go over their typical meals throughout the week to provide users with multiple types of meals that are beneficial to various athletes. Not all of the athletes who share their meal plans have the perfect diet, so BASE explains where improvements should be made and provides examples of meals that have a good source of protein and the types of foods that are considered to be a nutritious snack. By the end of second base, athletes are presented with countless meals that they can prepare in order to optimize their energy level.

Next, third base describes character. The stories of Lou Gehrig and Jackie Robinson were told to describe the significance of good character. Lou Gehrig demonstrated how loyalty, honesty, and being a good teammate can allow someone to rise right next to a baseball legend, Babe Ruth. Lou Gehrig’s talent, character, and 2,130

consecutive games played made him shine just as bright as Ruth in the baseball world during the 1920s and 1930s. Next, Jackie Robinson's indestructible character broke the color barrier in 1947. Despite the discrimination and constant racial slurs aimed at him, Jackie Robinson held his head high and constantly demonstrated good sportsmanship and devotion to the game of baseball. The fans and players' inability to break Jackie Robinson's integrity created a whole new form of respect for him and allowed African American's to safely enter the league. Be A Superior Example illustrates how character has produced some of the most monumental occurrences in Major League Baseball history.

The final base and one of the most critical bases is fair play. This base has Hall of Famers clarify how success comes through hard work and excelling in the three other bases (fitness, nutrition, and character) and not through performance enhancement drugs. These types of drugs might seem beneficial to reach a goal in the moment, but they are illegal, will cause the body to break down faster, and will not result in the exposure that players hope for when they try to join the all-time greats in baseball.

In general, the lessons for both age groups taught users that there are no short cuts to success. Similar to how players have to round all of the bases to score a run, individuals have to excel in many areas to achieve their goals. The lessons for kids 12 and under presented personal stories from fewer Hall of Famers and focused more on the interactive parts in order for the kids to understand each topic. Despite the differences in the programs for the age groups, all participants were educated on the four bases to success, were presented with various ways to obtain each base, and were ready to go out and be superior examples to others.

The Be A Superior Example exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum has recently been replaced. However, Be A Superior Example currently established BASE Week in Kansas City, Missouri, Salt Lake City, Utah, and San Francisco, California. Hall of Famers will share BASE's message and core values to kids in attendance similar to how BASE was taught at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum ("BASE Week Program", n.d.). May 2017 will mark the first ever BASE Week and this could be a program that quickly spreads to more cities with the help of other Hall of Famers.

### **VIII. Roberto Clemente Award Recipients**

The Roberto Clemente Award, originally called the Commissioner's Award, was renamed in 1973 after Roberto Clemente passed away. He was an incredible outfielder for the Pittsburgh Pirates from 1955-1972, but an even better humanitarian. Clemente "died to save others" (Freedman, 94). He passed away in a plane crash while attempting to bring supplies to Nicaragua after an earthquake. When people discuss Clemente's admirable traits, they talk about what an extraordinary person and philanthropist he was along with his 12 All-Star appearances and his MVP award ("RBI History," 2017). Now, athletes aspire to be just as influential as Clemente was on and off the field.

Every year, each of the thirty Major League Baseball teams nominate one player from their ball club who "best exemplifies the game of baseball, sportsmanship, community involvement and the individual's contribution to his team" (Marquwz, 2005, p. 102). Out of the thirty nominees, Major League Baseball will make the final decision and will honor that winner with the Roberto Clemente Award. The programs facilitated and coordinated by the nominees are intimate and unique to each and every one of them.

Many start a program in their hometown to create a safer or healthier environment for the residents. Other athletes raise awareness for a specific disease, usually because a loved one possessed that disease.

The Roberto Clemente Award is presented to the winner at that year's world series. During the player's moment of recognition, Chevrolet presents a monetary donation and a new Chevrolet to the charity of the player's choice. As a way of keeping Roberto Clemente's wishes alive, an annual donation is sent to the Roberto Clemente Sports City in Puerto Rico (MLB, 2008, p. 28). Major League Baseball has kept Roberto Clemente's spirit alive by establishing an award with never ending giving.

For the purpose of this study, only two out of the past forty-six programs coordinated by Roberto Clemente Award recipients will be analyzed. The two recipients are Craig Biggio from 2007 and David Ortiz from 2011. Because the Roberto Clemente Award acknowledges all of the community involvement achievements of the nominees, the community involvement with their ball club and their involvement on an individual basis is observed.

First, I evaluated the Houston Astros Craig Biggio. He assisted the majority of the Houston Astros community engagement events. This included meeting "Houston Astros hometown heroes," those who gave their time to military service. Biggio also visited local hospitals with his teammates to hang out with the patients. Another substantial event he did with the Astros was meeting visitors in Make-A-Wish Foundation at Minute Maid Ballpark ("Craig Biggio Named Recipient of Roberto Clemente Award," 2007).

For his individual-led community engagement program, Craig Biggio is the official spokesperson for the Sunshine Kids Foundation.. The Sunshine Kids Foundation is a non-profit organization created to provide activities free of charge for young cancer patients. Proceeds help create trips, parties, and other events throughout the year to provide a carefree atmosphere for these victims.

In his first fifteen years, the events Biggio was present he fundraised over \$2.5 million with organization. Personally, Craig Biggio is often found wearing some sort of token to represent the Sunshine Kid Foundation. He also hosts an annual golf tournament where all proceeds go directly to the foundation. This benefit alone has raised over \$1 million throughout the years. Biggio's most notable contribution to the Sunshine Kids Foundation comes from his Biggio Party held at Minute Maid Park. Biggio's Party invites young cancer patients to go play on the Astros field with Biggio and other Astros players ("Sunshine Kids," n.d.). Craig Biggio creates an atmosphere where these kids feel like big leaguers during a hard time in their lives.

The next Roberto Clemente Award recipient evaluated is Boston Red Sox's David Ortiz. Like Biggio, he contributed to the community engagement events implemented by his team. Nevertheless, David Ortiz established his own community engagement program, the David Ortiz Children Fund (DOCF), instead of joining a foundation and becoming the spokesperson. Ortiz was born in the Dominican Republic, so he began DOCF in his home country to provide financial aid to kids in need of critical pediatric care. A couple years after DOCF, the success of the foundation was quite apparent to the Boston area and DOCF partnered with Massachusetts General Hospital for Children. In 2010 alone, DOCF funded over 200 lifesaving heart operations (Newman, 2011). The



kids at Massachusetts General Hospital for Children often received tickets to Boston Red Sox games. David Ortiz supported these kids back to health and the kids cheered on Ortiz out at Fenway Park.

## **IX. Process**

In order to analyze the effectiveness and how Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities, Be A Superior Example, and the Roberto Clemente Award recipients' programs function, assorted methods were used. Major League Baseball Community Reports, Cardinals Care Community Reports, and San Diego Community Reports created a better understanding on Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities and the Roberto Clemente Award. For Be A Superior Example, I completed the online course to become a superior example for kids 12 and under and for people 12 and up. Furthermore, I interviewed the Director of Education at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

Once all information was gathered from these main sources, the process of measuring the success of each program began. First, the growth in participants, the opportunities created, and the growth in the distance impacted. Next, I analyzed whether the intended goal was obtained in all areas of the program. The growth findings in the three areas help determine why a program is successful and why a program might be experiencing difficulties in an area. Afterwards, I will present the strengths and weakness of each of the three programs.

## **X. Results**

Starting with Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities, I recorded the growth in participants. The try-outs held in 1989 to create teams for the first appeared to be a total

bust; only a handful of kids showed up to tryouts. By the end of the first season, 180 thirteen to sixteen year old boys joined the league. By the 2010 season, Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities expanded the qualifications for participants. A league that began with only thirteen to sixteen year old boys grew to a league of boys and girls ranging from the ages of five to eighteen.

Next, I evaluated the growth in distance impacted. In 1989, John Young began the first league in South Central Los Angeles, California. Once RBI's affiliation with MLB began in 1991, Young started to launch new leagues across the country. This rapid growth continuously occurred throughout the years. At the end of the 2002 Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities season, there were more than 100 new leagues nation-wide (Basuel et al., 2003, p. 13). By 2011, Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities spread to over 300 leagues in 200 cities world-wide.

For kids unable to join the baseball or softball league, RBI branched out and began to provide single day events for local kids in major cities around the country. The single day events taught the same lessons of boosting confidence, physical activity, and academic excellence, but these lessons were all condensed into a single day of activities for the kids. Next Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities started to offer multiple opportunities for players who excelled in baseball to be on display for scouts and colleges. Players who displayed academic excellence throughout the years in the league are eligible for scholarships. The opportunities offered by Reviving Baseball continuously progress.

This league-wide community engagement program successfully experienced a growth in participants, opportunities, and in distance that was affected. However, the success in these areas of the program created Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities greatest

weakness. RBI's goal to promote interest in baseball, improve self-esteem, and push kids towards academic excellence was only reached by some of the leagues. The expansion in leagues throughout the entire country, and then world-wide did not allow leagues to properly establish themselves.

Each league was only required to have one league coordinator and representative from Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities. Some cities had more assistance, such as the cities with a Major League Baseball team nearby. The Major League Baseball team often donated funding for the nearby RBI leagues or the ball club helped teach seminars for the coaches. On the other hand, the cities that were not close to a professional baseball team that could support them often had an issue with communication. One person served as the liaison between parents, coaches, players, and the headquarters for Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (Kihl et al., 2014). Coaches felt like they did not receive enough training and parents complained that they often felt out of the loop. As a result, some of the responsibilities that were supposed to be passed on to the parents were given to the coaches. The coaches regularly had to pick up their players and had to remind players about the requirement to stay in good academic standings in order to participate in games. Towns with these incidents instead created their own little leagues and observed Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities' leagues as examples of what not to do in their own leagues.

Since 1989, some of the leagues have obtained their intended goals. Previous players, such as Justin Upton and CC Sabathia, made it to the MLB due to the opportunities offered from Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities ("RBI History," 2017). More kids were in academic standings than if RBI was not implemented in some of the areas and RBI improved the players confidence. Yet, not all cities with Reviving Baseball

in Inner Cities received the same quality of experience. RBI did successfully grow their league-wide community engagement program. Unfortunately, they did not successfully complete their primary goal to promote interest in baseball, improve self-esteem, and push kids to attend school in every single league.

Next, Be A Superior Example was observed to analyze the growth and if the goals were met for an organization-led community engagement program. In 2011, Be A Superior Example began as four interactive kiosks on exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum to teach people about fitness, nutrition, character, and fair play. Each topic and kiosk represents reaching a “base” towards becoming a well-rounded individual or example to others.

Every year over 300,000 people visit the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (S. Hazzard, personal communication, March 2017). There is not an approximate count on the number of visitors that became a certified superior example, but the exhibit stayed up from 2011 until the end of 2016. The Education Department was so pleased with the outcome of the Be A Superior Example exhibit that they created a website for kids and adults to become certified examples and for teachers to teach the curriculum from the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in their classes on how to become superior examples.

This expansion created growth in multiple areas. The original Be a Superior Example program expanded from all ages becoming certified superior examples on the same kiosks to splitting up the program into two age groups, kids twelve and under and kids twelve and over. The separation of the groups allows the participants to experience the interactive program with activities more relevant to them. Next, creating a curriculum

that any teacher can use in a classroom and the webpage that allows anyone to become certified anywhere at any time broadened the program from the hours of 9:00am-5:00pm in Cooperstown, New York to limitless hours anywhere.

Even though the BASE (Be A Superior Example) exhibit ended at the National Baseball Hall of Fame this past year, the Education Department constructed BASE Week that will occur for the first time this May. BASE Week will take place in Kansas City, San Francisco, and Salt Lake City and the program in each of the three cities will be implemented by a different MLB Hall of Famer. Some of the Hall of Famers, such as Ozzie Smith, already walk through examples and activities on the webpage for BASE. However, the unique, in person activities coordinated by these Hall of Famers will cause a longer lasting impression on the kids.

From 2011 to 2017, the National Baseball Hall of Fame's BASE program has successfully grown in participants, distance impacted, and every year the Education Department comes up with innovative ideas to improve BASE. The real-life examples of MLB Hall of Famers and routines that users can insert into their everyday lives has made Be A Superior Example a successful organization-led community engagement program. There are no found unsatisfied experiences with BASE, only positive reports of kids and adults becoming well-rounded examples in their community.

Finally, the recipients of the Roberto Clemente Award are analyzed on the effectiveness of individual-led community engagement programs. The data collected is based off of Craig Biggio's and David Ortiz's involvement in their community. Both began their involvement in the community through their ball clubs and began expanding their community service tactics on their own.

Craig Biggio became the spokesperson for the Sunshine Kids Foundation and created his own events through them. The foundation found an increase in outside funds after this MLB all-star and Hall of Fame member joined their team. This nation-wide organization broadened Biggio's impact from Houston to the entire country, but Biggio stayed true to his roots by locating his events for the Sunshine Kids Foundation in Houston. The goal for the Sunshine Kids Foundation is to provide carefree, positive events for young cancer patients. The expansion of visits to these patients, to holding benefits, and finally to coordinating the Biggio Party for the patients demonstrates that Craig Biggio experienced a growth in patients, distance impacted, and opportunities created for the foundation. There are also no records of negative experiences in any part of Biggio's involvement in the community. With the help of the Sunshine Kids Foundation, Craig Biggio was involved in a successful community engagement program.

Next, David Ortiz created his individual-led community engagement program on his own. David Ortiz Children's Fund (DOCF) began close to Ortiz's heart, in the Dominican Republic. He went back to his home country to improve the health of kids by providing funding for those in need of a critical procedure. DOCF quickly grew and partnered up with the Massachusetts General Hospital for Children. David Ortiz's program grew in numbers and distance impacted. The expansion only grew to one other city and the program will probably not experience any further growth out of Massachusetts or the Dominican Republic, but those two places are David Ortiz's home. The love he has for these two places will guarantee that the goals are always met for the David Ortiz Children's Fund. Craig Biggio and David Ortiz took different paths to

improve the lives of others, but their time, dedication, and funds impacted their fans in the same way.

Despite all of the programs experiencing some sort of success, the organization-led community engagement is found to be the most influential. An organization's involvement in league-wide programs increase the chance for programs, such as RBI, to meet their goals. Organizations also introduce athletes to ways to create their own program and provide them with resources. All while organizations ensure the success of the other two types of programs, they are completing their intended goals and growing in the most efficient manner.

## **XI. Weakness in My Research**

Unfortunately, I was only able to thoroughly analyze one league-wide, one organization-led, and one type of individual-led community engagement program. The community reports available did provide a brief description of each of the thirty ball clubs most successful community relations program of that year, but I only saw a few years worth of the MLB's community reports.

## **XII. Opportunities for Future Research**

In future research, someone could compare the community engagement programs from various professional sports. This type of study would allow researchers to find if different sports run into their own unique strengths and weakness. The different sports community engagement programs could learn from each other the same way that league-wide, organization-led, and individual-led programs learn from each other.

For those who structure their research similar to mine by comparing the three different types of programs, they could analyze more programs from each type to provide more accurate results. The more programs evaluated, the higher the likelihood for more strengths and weaknesses from each level to appear.

### **XIII. Conclusion**

Based off of the results, league-wide programs reach the reach largest amount of kids and develop programs at a larger scale in general distance-wise; however, the most impactful league-wide programs are those with a professional ball club in the area to assist the program, such as RBI. Individual-led community engagement programs showed growth in all areas, even though the growth was not as rapid as the league-wide programs. The programs facilitated by the individual players also never lost passion. Resources and involvement from ball clubs encouraged the players to go out and participate in outside community service events and to create their own community engagement programs.

By looking at the results of these two types of programs and from analyzing BASE, it is found that organization-led programs are the most influential programs out of the three presented. The organizations aid the league-wide programs when possible; they ensure a greater possibility for success by providing resources and keeping the passion going for everyone involved. Players do not need help with the passion part of their program since they are already aiding a cause close to their heart, but they do need assistance with resources on how to start their program and on how to keep their program running.



These results demonstrate that resources are the primary issue for community engagement programs and that bigger programs are not always better. Organization-led community engagement programs impact many kids and extensive distances, but they keep the programs close enough to never lose sight of their goals or their passion for why they are running their program.

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