

Another year is in the books! On April 14<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated our 60<sup>th</sup> Opening Day Ceremony and honored our last 12 year old District Championship team from 1993. Over 450 people were in attendance on that beautiful spring day to welcome in the 2018 season! We closed out our season on September 14<sup>th</sup> at our annual end of the year BBQ at Kane Stadium. Approximately 350 people came out to help us celebrate another terrific season. All the food, drinks, condiments, paper products and dessert at this year's BBQ, were once again donated by a whole host of businesses and individuals in and from Secaucus. In no particular order, please let me thank: Wayne Wolf, Natoli's Deli, Il Forno, Giovanni's Deli, Sweet and Flour, Rob Roman, Vic Vazquez, Danielle and Michael Vecchione and Joe Barroquero. Much of the heavy lifting was done by Wayne Wolf and Rob Roman in getting the party pulled together. Please also let me thank John Young, Andrew Conti, John Mastropietro, Jeremy Papa, Kellyanne Bello and Julie Wolf for their help at the party. I'd also like to thank Kevin O'Connor and Mike Pero for the help provided by the Public Works and Recreation Departments in getting Kane Stadium ready for us and the cleanup afterwards! We couldn't have done it without all your help!

This season crowned another district champion as our Junior Baseball All Stars won the District 7 title. Our Juniors were led by manager John Young and coaches Wayne Wolf, Kyle Thomas and Rob Costantino. Our Major League division was won by ReMax/Infinity and manager Randy Worthington. ReMax came out of the losers' bracket to defeat top seeded Lichtenberger Insurance to capture the title. Our Minor League division title went to Harmon Meadow Jewelry Exchange and manager Brian Ferguson. Fergie's kids lead from wire to wire and defeated Strobert Foundation in the finals.

In addition to our champions being recognized, we gave out our postseason awards as well. Those winners were:

- George Bausewein Award (Major League MVP) – Dean Sosa, Lichtenberger Insurance
- Ken Czechowski Award (Pitcher of the Year) – Dean Sosa, Lichtenberger Insurance
- Vincent F. Butler, Sr. Award (Most Improved Player) – Zachary Michalkovich, Secaucus Paving
- The Mayor's Award (Rookie of the Year) – Xander Chin, Secaucus Paving and Mike Zena, Secaucus PBA

We also gave out our Sportsmanship Award to a member of each of our Major, Junior and Senior League teams. Those winners are:

- Majors
  - Ronan Young, Secaucus Paving
  - Jake Cerny and Mikey Capurso, Secaucus PBA
  - Xavier Kolmer, Lichtenberger Insurance
  - Jacob Orlando, ReMax/Infinity
  - Steven Vega, K&S Social Club
- Juniors and Seniors
  - Brandon Genna, Secaucus PBA
  - David Smentkowski, Wolf Pack Enterprises
  - Richie Wolf, Secaucus VFW

Our volunteer of the year for 2018 was Brian Ferguson. Fergie was invaluable as he helped coordinate the T-Ball/Pewee Divisions and was a major help throughout the state tournament. He also coached two teams! Thanks, Ferg!

Secaucus Little League hosted the 2018 Joe Graziano New Jersey Little League Tournament which crowns the state champion and puts them further along the road to Williamsport. This year's participants were: Somerset Hills LL (Section 1), Elmora LL (Section 2), Middletown LL (Section 3) and Millville American LL (Section 4). Middletown won and represented NJ in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Tournament in Bristol, CT. They made it to the losers' bracket finals and represented NJ very well! Congratulations to all!

Prior to the start of the state tournament, Secaucus Little League hosted a kickoff banquet for the players, coaches, league officials and players families at La Reggia Restaurant. Our guest speaker was former MLB player and co-host of MLB Central on the MLB Network, Mark DeRosa. Mark was incredible as he spent a great deal of time with the kids and coaches prior to the banquet beginning and then spoke to the entire room for just under an hour! Mark helped make the night a rousing success!

The state tournament would not have been possible if not for the continued support and dedication of Mayor Mike Gonnelli to the kids of Secaucus. Mayor Gonnelli provided all the resources needed to make the whole event the biggest success it could be. I'd also like to thank Gary Jeffas, Lisa Snedeker, Councilman Rob Costantino, Kevin O'Connor, Mike Pero, Captain Carlos Goyenchea, Sergeant Martin Moreda, Frank Sasso, Rob Michalkovich and the rest of the Secaucus Police Department and DPW for all their efforts. I'd also like to thank league members and fellow volunteers, Andrew Conti, Stephen De Leo, Patti DeLeo, Chris Seshadri and PhotoSesh, Cheryl Marcelic, Jeremy Papa, John Young, Joe Mateo, Andrew Conti, Jr., Sharon Conti, Robin Conti, Olivia Conti, Paul Giorgio, Ben Rotondi, Neil Fajardo, Lisa Fayed, Saad Fayed, Kathleen Powers, Ed Marcelic, Arty Schmitt and Craig Schmitt.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank my wife, Kim, for the love, support and patience she showed me during this season. Little League always takes up a great deal of time, but this year was different than prior years as the state tournament was a bear to get ready. I couldn't have done it without you. Thank you, baby. I love you.

Thank you again for a wonderful 2018 season and I look forward to seeing everyone back on the diamond in 2019! Enjoy the rest of the year!!