

# NEWS RELEASE

**ROCKFORD PARK DISTRICT** MAKING MEMORIES FOR A LIFETIME

**From:** Rockford Park District and Friends of Beyer Stadium

**For Immediate Release:** Wednesday, June 2, 2010

**For Additional Information Contact:**

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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **Park District and Friends of Beyer Host Beyer Field Re-Dedication Event; Former Rockford Peaches Attending**

**ROCKFORD, IL** – The Rockford Park District has teamed up with The Friends of Beyer Stadium to host a Beyer Field Re-Dedication Event on **Saturday, June 5, 2010 at 1 pm at Beyer Field**, 333 15th Ave. in Rockford. The event is being held to celebrate the recently refurbished Beyer Field ball diamond. Enhancements included the installation of a new baseball diamond, historically-accurate backstop, vintage scoreboard, flag pole, and plaque.

Nearly 20 former All American Girl Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) players plan to attend this re-dedication event on Saturday including six or seven former Rockford Peaches. Speakers include Winnebago County Chairman Scott Christiansen, Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey, Friends of Beyer Stadium Representative Andrew Wright, and several former Rockford Peaches. Visitors are invited to meet the ladies of the AAGPBL; photo opportunities in front of the replica scoreboard will be available.

“The Rockford Peaches are known world-wide and we owe it to the ‘girls’ to commemorate the park that at one time brought over 90,000 people to the stadium in a given year,” said Friends of Beyer Stadium Member Greg Schwanke. “At our June 5<sup>th</sup> re-dedication, it truly will be wonderful when we finally are able to proudly hang our American and Rockford Peaches flags at that park. Many people are looking forward to this day,” he continued.

Built in 1925, the stadium was used for high school football games and other events. Between 1943 and 1954, Beyer Stadium was home to the Rockford Peaches and was featured in the 1992 movie “A League of Their Own.” In 1992, the stadium was demolished to create more athletic fields for Beyer school.

(more)



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In addition to the new ball diamond, backstop, and scoreboard, the Friends of Beyer Stadium are spearheading a fundraising campaign to raise funds for additional park enhancements. A private donation helped fund the purchase of the flags and plaque. Income from the Charles A. Beyer/Rockford Jaycees endowment fund of the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois was established in 1997 and provides an average of \$5,000 a year for the Park District to maintain and enhance Beyer Park. Since its first distribution in 2000, the fund has given approximately \$50,000 in distributions.

Friends founding member, Andrew Wright, said an endowment fund was set up by the Jaycees over 13 years ago, and their Friends group also established a capital fund with the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois specifically earmarked for capital improvement projects for Beyer Park. "The original endowment fund was set up to provide an annual stipend for maintenance and minor improvements to the site. Our dream is to create a beautiful, usable community resource to tell the history of the sports once played on this field, particularly the stories of the world-famous Rockford Peaches," said Wright.

### **About the "Friends of Beyer Stadium" Group**

- **1997** - The Rockford area Jaycees created an \$79,264 endowment through the Rockford Community Foundation. As per the endowment, funds earned from interest on the principal would help maintain and enhance Beyer Field.
- **1998** - The "Friends of Beyer Stadium" group was formed with a goal of restoring the baseball field at Beyer Park.
- **2000 – 2009** – Interest from the endowment funded various maintenance projects at the park, including: fence repairs, re-grading seeding, ticket booth restoration, and the completion of a site plan based on input given by the Friends Group.

### **Active Members/Supporters:**

- Greg Schwanke – Blackhawk Sandblasting & Painting
- Andrew Wright – Rockford IceHogs
- Steve McIntosh - MACK Paper Company
- Peter Kink - RAC Investigative Services
- Al Dahlmer – Player's Pizza Pub

### **Purpose:**

To provide resources to support the long-term and continuing use of Beyer Park as a park for the neighborhood and Beyer School, where children and adults can use the area for sports activities. Likewise, people interested in the history of baseball and those looking for inspiration for their children to participate in sports will seek out Beyer Park from around the country.

(more)



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## **Mission:**

To restore Beyer Park field to Rockford's own field of dreams.

## **Beyer Stadium Background**

- **1925** - Beyer Stadium was a fundraising effort undertaken by the Kiwanis organization. The stadium and site on 15th Avenue was accepted by the Rockford School District and included concrete stands with wooden bleacher seating, and a football field surrounded by an all-weather track. Because this was the first lighted football field in the area, the stadium became Rockford's premiere sports venue.
- **1948** - The stadium was named after Charles A. Beyer, Rockford High School's football, track, and basketball coach.
- **1943 – 1954** – Home stadium for the "Rockford Peaches" AAGPBL team
- **1960s** – Field was home to four high school teams and numerous junior high teams; over 40 football games were played each fall.
- **1992** – The stadium was demolished to create more athletic fields for Beyer School.

## **Friends of Beyer Stadium Donations**

Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law; make checks payable to:  
CFNIL (Community Foundation of Northern Illinois) In memo field: "Beyer Field Restoration Fund"

## **Mail checks to: Community Foundation of Northern Illinois**

946 N. Second St.  
Rockford, IL 61107

For more information, contact Greg Schwanke at 815-979-2899 or [blasterpainter3@hotmail.com](mailto:blasterpainter3@hotmail.com).

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