



January 21, 2008

Dear Trustees and All Interested Parties,

My son Ben and I had the opportunity to meet with volunteers and assess the damages sustained by Clatskanie and Vernonia due to December's flooding. Only one word comes to mind: Stunning.

### **Clatskanie Little League**

We first met with the folks from Clatskanie. Dawn Warren and her Board have worked very hard to enable volunteers to simply begin the process of restoring their two fields. With every step, ones feet sink into two to four inches of mud and silt. The fields are the only area of Clatskanie that were severely affected by the rains. Adjacent to their rear field (under more normal conditions) is an otherwise charming fifteen-foot water fall and stream running the full length of both fields. Swollen by the rains, the stream completely engulfed both fields, corner to corner.

Effectively, nearly all field-level amenities, the two story concession stand in left field, and the two story score keepers facility behind home plate were damaged. Thus far, volunteers have begun removing mud from the perimeter of the field, but access is difficult due to the mud, the logistics of the front field, no road to the rear field, and still more mud. The local fire department has washed out the front field dugouts, lumber for the bleachers has been donated, ODOT has agreed to provide and spread gravel in the parking strip and they have received \$3,000 from the owner of the local pizza parlor.

This group has a roster of over 50 volunteers who have agreed to help once the funding and a solid game plan can be reached. After being contacted by FOB, Mike Hebrard of Athletic Field Design has agreed to help assess damage and cultivate this plan. The league's goal is to get the fields up and running by April 5<sup>th</sup>. Contingency plans are in place if this cannot be accomplished. As we walked the outfield, I notice a white dot the size of a silver dollar peeking out of the mud. I dug in the mud I found one of the leagues balls; picture attached along with others ...

In addition to significant funding to bring safety back to the fields they have a "wish list" of items that maybe someone we know might be able to donate. Many of these items are amenities - some are things that would give them the opportunity to improve their facilities. At this time, all current (and very limited) reserves are being plowed back into the fields. Their priorities are certainly in order.

Some items that would assist in getting them back on their feet include:

>>> The use of a paint booth to paint their metal bleacher supports  
>>> Cyclone fencing, bark dust, paint, roofing, a chalker, break-away bases, ice machine, BBQ, utility shed, picnic tables, concession stand supplies, teen-sized umpire gear and a new Home Plate.

If you have, or know of, any resources that might help this group, please email me at [Keenan@Friendsofbaseball.org](mailto:Keenan@Friendsofbaseball.org) or contact Dawn Warren at Clatskanie directly at 503-455-2239. We can arrange for transportation to the facilities if necessary.

### **Vernonia Youth Summer Baseball Association**

Thankfully, Vernonia's fields are on high ground. The town's main street, 50% of the homes and their sports storage facility, unfortunately, are not. The community of Vernonia lost all team-related equipment for Baseball, Softball, Soccer and Football when several feet of contaminated water filled their storage shed. To compound the problem, the extent of the flooding of private homes was so substantial that what little funding is available is needed for the bare essentials of daily living.

In meeting with Brent Dass and his family, who are coordinating this collection drive, the stories are heartbreaking. Kids are being bussed to Scappoose for school; some schools were flooded for the third time and may not be rebuilt at their current locations. The youngest of children are afraid to be away from their parents, and some of the older ones suffer from nightmares, depression and exhaustion. Brent explained that the people of Vernonia are proud of their community because they always "take care of their own," but that this has made folks hesitant to reach out to other communities for help.

Like Clatskanie, Vernonia serves about 150 kids in their baseball/softball programs. They are committed to finding funding to provide team scholarships for all kids affected at home by the floods, which is expected to be at least half of Vernonia's youth. No one will be left out from being able to play. This alone represents nearly \$4,000 in scholarship funding!

FOB has secured and delivered some much-needed equipment, (see photo) but the list is still very long. The team has currently secured approximately \$6,000 in donations, but I was told the football gear alone was valued at \$10,000. We continue the collection process; please contact me at the above email address for an updated list of equipment still needed. Also feel free to contact Brent Dass directly at 503-429-9352.

In addition, this league hopes to find a used shipping container that can be stationed (on high ground) at the field for storage and possible use as a concession stand to create long-term funding and sustainability. Netting is also needed to keep balls from being lost behind the backstop and down the embankment. In 2009, this league has dreams of finishing a second baseball field at their park facilities.

Friends of Baseball is in the final stages of grant review for these two organizations. These communities - these kids - need to find an aspect of "normalcy" back in their lives. It would be wonderful if these communities were not only made "whole" but were rewarded with facilities and equipment that would be an enhancement over those of previous years.

***Thanks to all of you have already helped out in so many, many ways.*** Please forward this along to any and all contacts that might be able to assist with these teams and their dreams.

Personal Regards,

Keenan

***"A life is not important except in the impact it makes on other lives. . ."*** Jackie Robinson

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