



NEWS RELEASE From Mayor Dean DePiero

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PARMA TO HOST CHALLENGER LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

(PARMA) – Parma has been selected to host the prestigious Ohio Challenger Baseball Little League Tournament scheduled for July of next year. The Challenger Little League Baseball program was established for boys and girls ages five to 18 with physical and mental disabilities.

“We really hit a home run by being selected as the host city for this very special sports program,” said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. “We will be welcoming several hundred players, parents and coaches from all across the Buckeye State. It says a lot about the city of Parma’s Recreation Program as well as the great job being done by Parma Recreation Director Mickey Vittardi.”

Organizers of Challenger Little League say the program provides therapeutic and socialization benefits for the players. Coaches say it also builds self-esteem while allowing the children an opportunity to enjoy the game of baseball along with millions of other Little Leaguers around the world.

“Challenger Baseball has proven to be a winner in cities across the country,” said Parma Recreation Director Mickey Vittardi. “Our community should be both excited and proud to have been selected to host this great event.”

The program’s fundamental goal is to give everyone a chance to play, regardless of limitations. Parents, coaches and siblings act as “buddies” to assist the Challengers run the bases, catch, throw, push wheelchairs and more.

“We plan to give these young VIP’s the red carpet treatment,” said Mickey Vittardi. “Challenger Baseball allows them to experience the joys of pulling together as a team, something many of us take for granted.”

The Challenger Little League Baseball Tournament will be played at Veterans Memorial Park (formerly State Road Park) July 18 and 19, 2009. For more information call the Parma Recreation Department at 440-885-8144.

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