



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF GREATER  
NORTHWEST INDIANA**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 16, 2020

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Northwest Indiana Awarded Field Refurbishment Grant from Scotts® and Major League Baseball**

*Boys & Girls Clubs Among Four Organizations Awarded Field Refurbishments by Blue Ribbon Panel, Which Included Ryan Howard, Jennie Finch & Cliff Floyd*

GARY, IN – Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Northwest Indiana has been named an award recipient of the Scotts® Field Refurbishment Program, an initiative from the Scotts Company LLC (Scotts) and Major League Baseball (MLB) which will once again award modern, playable youth baseball and softball field refurbishments to four communities of need within the United States.

Boys & Girls Clubs is one of four grant-winning organizations announced today that were selected from nearly 500 grant applications across more than 400 cities in 48 states and Washington, D.C. for the 2020 installment of the Scotts® Field Refurbishment Program. The winning organizations were chosen by a special blue-ribbon panel which included three-time MLB All-Star & 2008 World Series Champion Ryan Howard, Olympic Gold Medalist & MLB Youth Softball Ambassador Jennie Finch, 1997 World Series Champion & MLB Network analyst Cliff Floyd, and additional executive leadership from MLB and Scotts.

Scotts will rehabilitate the field at John Will Anderson Boys & Girls Club in Gary, which has been housed in the former Tolleston School since 2013 after relocating from its prior location on Fifth Avenue. The building previously sat vacant for four years after the school closed in 2009, leaving the adjacent field nearly unplayable. The condition of the field required Boys & Girls Clubs to primarily hold its baseball programming, which is funded in part through a grant from Major League Baseball's Play Ball program, inside the Club's gymnasium.

Boys & Girls Clubs President and CEO Ryan Smiley said the Scotts Field Refurbishment is a significant chance to revitalize baseball and softball programming for Club members in Gary.

"This is huge for our kids and our organization," Smiley said. "Our baseball program has been limited, so being able to give Club members a true baseball experience outdoors on a professionally built field is a one-of-a-kind opportunity. We are hopeful this will help us reach even more kids and develop a lifelong love of the game in some of them."

Smiley also praised Scotts and Major League Baseball for demonstrating their belief in the potential of Gary youth.

"The city of Gary has been through a lot, and something like this shows our kids that not only should they be proud of their city, but that Scotts and Major League Baseball believe in them and what they can accomplish," he said. "We are so grateful for their support of our Club members and organization."

The other organizations receiving grants in 2020 include City of Memphis Parks and Neighborhoods (Memphis, Tenn.), Ferguson Parks & Recreation (Ferguson, Mo.), and the Oakland Athletics Community Fund (Oakland,

Calif.). In total, more than \$200,000 in repairs and upgrades on these youth fields will be completed by the end of the year.

“We’d like to congratulate this year’s grant recipients for being selected for a field refurbishment for their local communities,” said Josh Peoples, SVP, Chief Brand Officer, Scotts Miracle-Gro. “This year we received a record number of applications and the selection process was difficult, to say the least. Preserving greenspaces in our local communities is at the core of our Gro More Good initiative and our hope is that by refurbishing these fields, children will be able to live a healthier and more active lifestyle for years to come.”

MLB and Scotts, a long-time league sponsor, began the Scotts® Field Refurbishment Program prior to the 2016 season to provide kids with modern, playable ball fields in communities around the U.S. The Scotts® Field Refurbishment Program is part of Scotts’ Gro More Good initiative to improve children’s health and well-being through increased connection to greenspaces. Scotts is also an official partner of the ‘PLAY BALL’ initiative, the sport’s largest collective effort to encourage young people and communities to participate in baseball- or softball-related activities, including formal leagues, events and casual forms of play. Through 2020, the Scotts® Field Refurbishment Program will have renovated two dozen fields with nearly \$1.75 million of support.

“We are pleased to once again partner with Scotts to improve field conditions in these four communities,” said Tony Reagins, Executive Vice President of Baseball & Softball Development, MLB. “In these difficult times, we hope that one day soon youth baseball and softball can be a unifying force in communities all across our nation. For now, we believe these renovated ballfields can offer some optimism for the future in light of many not being able to play organized baseball and softball yet this year. We look forward to continuing to provide access to quality fields so youth across the nation can continue to play our great game.”

#### **About Major League Baseball**

Major League Baseball (MLB) is the most historic professional sports league in the United States and consists of 30 member clubs in the U.S. and Canada, representing the highest level of professional baseball. Major League Baseball is the best-attended sport in North America, and since 2004, MLB has enjoyed its best-attended seasons in the history of the game. Led by Commissioner Robert D. Manfred, Jr., MLB currently features record levels of labor peace, competitive balance and industry revenues, as well as the most comprehensive drug-testing program in American professional sports. MLB remains committed to making an impact in the communities of the U.S., Canada and throughout the world, perpetuating the sport’s larger role in society and permeating every facet of baseball’s business, marketing and community relations endeavors. With the continued success of MLB Network and MLB digital platforms, MLB continues to find innovative ways for its fans to enjoy America’s National Pastime and a truly global game. For more information on Major League Baseball, visit [www.MLB.com](http://www.MLB.com).

#### **About Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Northwest Indiana:**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Northwest Indiana has been opening doors to GREAT FUTURES for Porter and Lake County youth for over 60 years. Clubs are open after school and provide great places for youth in grades K-12 to meet friends and have fun while in a safe, supervised environment. Clubs are open during holidays and in the summer. Annual membership is only \$40.00. For information on membership, volunteer opportunities, or to make a tax-deductible donation, please contact your local Club by calling (219) 764-2582 or visiting [bgcgreaternwi.org](http://bgcgreaternwi.org). Great Futures Start HERE.

###

#### **Contact:**

Dylan McKee, Director of External Affairs  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Northwest Indiana  
(219) 764-2582 x 420  
[dmckee@bgcgreaternwi.org](mailto:dmckee@bgcgreaternwi.org)