

People Helping People Business Awards

Nominee -Sacramento River Cats

Category – Exceptional Community Support Award

Submitted by: Tony Asaro
Director of Community Relations
Sacramento River Cats

1 Program Name: Community Relations and River Cats Foundation

2 Collaboration: None

3 Programs Started: 2000

4 Number of Employees participating in project (s): 300+

5 Who is participating? Full time and part-time employees

6 Who benefits? Family and Youth based non-profits and schools

Description:

Since May of 2000 the Sacramento River Cats have worked to develop and foster strong ties to the regional community by supporting those in need. Our mission in the community is to improve the quality of life for children and families through our support of community based programs. We pride ourselves on this philosophy and have worked hard to have it permeate everything we do. The River Cats and Raley Field is a community asset and we work to extend the opportunity to enjoy the park and all it has to offer to many folks, who otherwise would not be able to enjoy the experience. We have impacted thousands of organizations, but we try not to be all things to all people. We have focused our energy and resources toward families and youth organizations. In this way we believe we can have the biggest impact in the community.

In 2000 the River Cats Foundation was formed as a 501© (3) organization to award grants to deserving non-profit organizations supporting youth and family-based activities in the greater Sacramento area. The Foundation has distributed approximately \$450,000 in grants to 50+ non-profits in the past three years. The value of Community Goods and Services each year is well over \$600,000. A partial list of those receiving grants include the Sacramento Food Bank, West Sacramento Teen Center, Children's Receiving Home, Youth Guidance Connection, Late Night North Highlands, Girl Scouts of Tierra Del Oro, Boys and Girls Club of Sacramento and Auburn, and many others.

Additionally the Sacramento River Cats Community Relations Department has concentrated its efforts toward three School /Community programs focusing on education:

1. Crystal Home Run Tours
2. Triple-A Assemblies
3. Champions For Education

Following is a description of how each of these programs have made a positive impact on students throughout the region and helped raise funds for the budget reductions in schools.

Impact:

The Crystal Home Run Tours ...this program debuted in July of 2001 and over 12,000 students have visited Raley Field for a behind the scenes field trip with an educational twist. We have designed a curriculum tying baseball math, baseball history, baseball science, and for the older students we incorporate careers in sports management. Our corporate partners Crystal Cream and Butter and NEWS 10 also contribute a section on Health and Safety and Emmy Award winning videos on weather and the history of baseball in Sacramento. Our tours finish with a session on life lessons. We get a great deal of satisfaction seeing the students practice what they learn each day at school. Parents and Educators have evaluated this program as a great learning tool and highly recommended to their fellow educators.

Triple-A Assemblies... This program travels to more than 100 area public and private schools to help those school/communities set goals each year as well as honor students achievements. The River Cats are a Triple –A baseball team and we spread the word to over 55,000 students that those Triple- A's represent:

Attitude
Attendance
Academics

These assemblies are age appropriate with the elementary levels concentrating on a drug and tobacco awareness message and/or school goals (respect /responsibility / rewards – I can - I will - Succeed). The programs for Middle and High Schools are geared to career information (resume/ job interviews/ job descriptions/dress for success... etc.) We recently added a new element to the Triple –A program featuring three River Cats day games involving more than 6,000 students participating from seventy different schools - involved in the Triple-A message and career information. Parents, schools and the River Cats all use the Triple-A message to challenge students to make the best choices. These programs urge all students in our region to strive to reach their school and community potential.

Champions For Education... The Sacramento River Cats formed the Champions For Education grant program to help make up for budget reductions in education. This program awards grants in the broad areas of education to Sacramento regional schools.

The Champions For Education Fund was designed to create grants funded from the River Cats playoffs games (\$ 1 from each ticket sold) to focus on formal K-12 education, including fine arts, music, athletics, outdoor education, career education, tutoring, enrichment and teacher development. The Champions for Education grants will continue to be funded in the future to support our schools. Our children are our most valuable resource and the solutions to our questions in the future are with our children.

Conclusion:

We are proud of our support of the community because it makes a real change in the daily lives of students and families in our region. This support emanates from throughout our organization-from the owner Art Savage to the players and their wives to the quest services, parking attendants, ushers and security (the backbone of our staff). Each year the River Cats host a baseball clinic for 100+ physically and/or mentally challenged youth called Baseball for All. Our corporate partners, former major league baseball players, and our staff volunteer their time /our facility /food and refreshment/ and special memories to these kids at no cost to the families. The Players Wives Food Drive has raised thousands of dollars and collected several tons of food in our community for food banks in Sacramento and Yolo counties. The players wives/booster club/and community groups with the volunteer support of hundreds of the River Cats staff have made this a tradition and success each year. The Sacramento River Cats working to make the community a special place to live.