



Revitalizing Neighborhoods Together™

In the News...

Date: May 13, 2009

Softball Receives Honor at UPA Awards Luncheon

Courtesy: Akron Media Relations Release: 05/13/2009

AKRON, Ohio – After an outstanding season on the diamond, The University of Akron softball team recently received the prestigious 'Neighborhood Nexus Award' from the University Park Alliance at the sixth annual University Park Awards Luncheon. The event honored 15 individuals and groups for their efforts in the designated area near the hospitals, university and downtown with the softball team receiving the distinguished student award.

The mission of University Park Alliance (UPA) is to revitalize the diverse neighborhood in a 50-block area immediately surrounding The University of Akron, through engaging the community and catalyzing real estate and business investment.

The softball team contributed to many community projects over the past year, including Make a Difference Day with the UPA, conducting sports clinics at Leggett and Mason Elementary Schools, and working with the Summit County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities just to name a few.

During Make a Difference Day 2008, the team reached out to help Junior Achievement prepare for their fundraiser. Eighteen team members took pictures of auction items, wrote descriptions of and cataloged donated items, and made phone calls requesting donations and asking for community involvement in the event. They also streamlined the donation request process by cross-referencing information and updating mailing and phone lists.

The team also participated in programs created by the Department of Athletics such as Zippy's Readers and the Sports Clinic program. Zippy's Readers is a program where student-athletes read to elementary school students for a morning or afternoon, along with Akron's mascot, Zippy. Not only has the team participated at Leggett and Mason, but they have also read to students at McEbright Elementary in Akron. In addition, the team held a Sports Clinic this year, creating an afternoon of softball drills, skill sessions, and fun games for the students at Leggett Elementary. These programs are designed to teach the younger generation not only the skills of a sport, but for our student-athletes to become mentors to this generation, and develop their leadership skills.

The Zips have also participated in other community service projects that are outside of the University Park Alliance area. The team joined with the Akron Juvenile Detention Center, acting as role-models for children there. They also have participated for two years in the Memory Walk for Alzheimer's at Blossom Music Center, raising money for their cause. In addition, the team has given much of their time to the Summit County Board of MRDD participating in bowling nights four times a year, helping serve food at their holiday party, donating items for their holiday party, as well as helping them with a car wash for their Handicapped Arts Program.

A group of well-rounded student athletes, the Zips were also outstanding on the field in 2009 as they posted a 35-24 overall record, which tied the team for the most wins since the 1998 season and the second most ever since Akron joined the MAC in 1993. The Zips' 11-10 conference mark in 2009 was the most league victories the team has had since 2006.

