



Baer Park field a real diamond after renovation

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By **Holly Herman**

Ten-year-old Blayke Taddei of Reading looked at the \$88,000 renovated baseball field at Reading's Baer Park on Saturday in awe.

"Next year, I will be playing here," Blayke said of the field during opening day as the Reading Fightin Phils joined local officials in a ribbon-cutting ceremony. "I love baseball. I play pitcher and first base."

Baseballtown Charities, a nonprofit organization supported by the Fightin Phils, raised \$88,000 from the Wyomissing and Colonial Oaks foundations and other local charities to refurbish the field.

Baseballtown works to keep baseball going strong for local youth.

Chuck Domino, Baseballtown's president, said members of the Fightins and Alvernia College students worked last summer to move away old benches and clean up the park for the field, which will be used by Northwest Middle School and the Latino Softball League.

The bulk of the funds were spent on a fence and new bleachers.

Northwest Principal Joel Brigel thanked everyone for raising money and working hard to make the field perfect.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to make many great memories," he said.

The entire Fightin Phils team attended the ceremony to see the results of their community service.

Susan Ingersoll, director of baseball administration for the Philadelphia Phillies, said players on the Phillies' minor league teams are required to perform 10 hours of community service a year.

She expressed appreciation to the Fightin Phils for far exceeding the requirement. She acknowledged pitcher Tyler Knigge, who performed 75 hours of community service last year, one of the highest numbers of any player in the Phillies minor league system.

Daphne Klahr, Executive Director of the Reading Recreation Commission, which organized the project, said Baer Park historically has had one of the nicest baseball fields in Reading.

State Sen. Judy Schwank, a Ruscombmanor Township Democrat who took part in the ceremony, called on the community to maintain the fields.

City Councilwoman Donna Reed said that growing up she always looked forward to playing baseball.

"Generations of kids will play on this field." Reed said.

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