

July 12, 2007

Young cancer victims treated to Tigers' game

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After a ride in a limousine to a Detroit Tigers game, time in a suite at Comerica Park and a chance to meet famous players, a rained out game didn't faze seven little boys and their parents on June 27.

The event, called "Take Me Out to the Ball Game Day," was together by Camp Casey, a 501©3 nonprofit organization. The organization provides a cost-free series of one-day retreats for children with cancer and their families.

At the park, the children were treated to free t-shirts, a visit with Tigers catcher Ivan "Pudge" Rodriguez, a surprise visit from Hall of Famer Al Kaline, and all the food they could handle.

"I think the kids felt as though they were V.I.P.," said Molly Melamed, the founder of Camp Casey. "Every minute they had something fun happening."

In the past, Camp Casey has mainly organized trips for kids to go horseback riding, but after Mike Maiman, the father of Camp Casey's Director of Public Affairs Lauren Mainman, donated a suite and Tiger Den tickets, "Take Me Out to the Ball Game Day" went on to the next base.

Maiman originally offered the tickets as a Camp Casey fundraiser, but Melamed had other ideas. She told Maiman that she wanted to use them for her kids instead.

So Melamed contacted Starlight Entertainment and Limousine of Romulus and asked if they would like to be involved with the event. The company was happy to donate the use of their coach limousine.

"They were ecstatic about being involved," Melamed said.

Joseph Brown, the office manager of Starlight Entertainment and Limousine, helped set up the partnership. He also went with the children to Comerica Park. He described the day as "spectacular" and felt that the donation was well worth it.

"The looks on their faces was payment enough," Brown said.

Through the event, the children were able to feel like celebrities and form friendships, according to Melamed.

Camp Casey's mission is to give families a break from cancer and this event was one of many the group has sponsored.

Melamed created Camp Casey four years ago when she was a 19-year-old student at Michigan State University. She was inspired by a little girl, Casey Foot, who had bone and brain cancer and was impacted by horses.

Melamed originally only planned for a one-day event to take place, but the program has grown. This year, Camp Casey will host five retreats. Along with therapeutic horseback riding opportunities, Camp Casey will also offer a day for little girls and their mothers to be pampered; including getting their nails done.

Camp Casey is currently looking for donations for this and any future events. Donations enable the program to conserve resources.

More information on the program can be found at www.campcasey.org.

<http://www.journalgroup.com/Romulus/5220/young-cancer-victims-treated-to-tigers-game>

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