



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB**  
OF BETHALTO

## **BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF BETHALTO GETS ALL-STAR TREATMENT**

**BETHALTO, IL** – With a little help from a Prince, Boys & Girls Club of Bethalto members were given the royal treatment during Major League Baseball’s All-Star Game festivities in July.

The Club took home a king’s ransom at the State Farm Home Run Derby as its Youth of the Year, Kylie Kochel, was paired with Milwaukee Brewers’ Prince Fielder. With Fielder’s derby win, the Club won \$50,000, which was designated for development of a teen center. Prior to the event, Kochel participated in a press conference on ESPN with the home run derby competitors. Kochel, a state Youth of the Year finalist, was honored to represent the Club at the derby.

“I never thought this would happen, and it was way beyond what I thought I was going to get,” said Kochel. “I really wanted Albert Pujols or (the Phillies’) Ryan Howard, but I’m very happy I was paired with Prince.”

The home run derby was just one of several All-Star Game activities for the Club members. Twenty-five lucky members of Camp Cool, the Club’s summer program, opened All-Star weekend with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, featuring Hall of Famer Ozzie Smith at MLB’s FanFest. In addition to the Wizard of Oz, the Club members got to visit with St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay, Tim Lincecum of MLB, and Bill DeWitt III of the St. Louis Cardinals. Before heading into the FanFest, the members got to meet and interact with MLB mascots, Fredbird of the Cardinals, Captain of the Texas Rangers, Screech of the Washington Nationals and Oakland A’s Stomper.

“FanFest was awesome, and Ozzie (Smith) had me stand right next to him,” said 10-year-old, David Lane. “We did pitching video games, batting cages, and a stealing home contest. We got interviewed. It was great.”

For the XM Satellite Futures Game, 15 Club members carried the flags of the top minor-league prospects’ countries. The following day, 16 Club members demonstrated their skills in the Cal Ripken Jr. Clinic. Following the clinic with the Hall of Famer, the members were paired with local media personalities for the State Farm Tee-Ball Home Run Derby. One member, Jakob Lowrance, became a YouTube sensation, calling his shot and sending a home run over the center field wall.

On game day, Club members took part in the RBI Clinic at FanFest, getting instructions from Andre Dawson, Tommy John, and Hall of Famer Tony Gwynn. The Club’s participation at the All-Star Game culminated with four members having VIP seating for the Red Carpet Parade.

Over 50 Club youth, board members, and staff participated in the five days of All-Star Game fun. Even without the Princely sum of \$50,000, the once in the lifetime opportunities were priceless.

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