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Pitch In For Baseball

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Postal Service Goes to Bat for Children in Need

WASHINGTON, DC — As organized youth baseball and softball wind down for the summer, the Postal Service is suggesting that parents and youngsters who play ball not retire their used gear but ship it instead to “Pitch In For Baseball®” a non-profit organization that collects “gently used” equipment and distributes it to children in need.

“Yesterday, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of baseball’s unofficial anthem by issuing the “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” stamp,” said Postmaster General John Potter. “Today, we’re helping Pitch In For Baseball deliver their message, ‘let your equipment play extra innings,’ and are encouraging Americans to donate bats, balls, gloves and other equipment so that more children can enjoy the sport.”

“The communities Pitch In For Baseball serves often are struggling for basic needs,” said Pitch In For Baseball Executive Director David Rhode. “Pitch In For Baseball wants to make sure kids in those communities aren’t overlooked. Baseball gives them the structure and freedom to be kids while making good decisions for their future. Kids not only have fun, but also learn important lessons for their future like teamwork, sportsmanship and dealing with adversity.”

Pitch In For Baseball accepts new or gently used youth gloves, cleats, aluminum bats, catcher’s gear, instructional books, videos and aids such as batting tees. Rhode describes “gently used” as gear one would feel comfortable giving to a friend or family member. If in doubt, Rhode said to go ahead and mail items to:

Pitch In For Baseball
1901 Pennsylvania Avenue
Fort Washington, PA 19034

Customers visiting Post Offices through the end of August will see additional information on the program, or they can visit www.usps.com/baseball. Examples of Postal Service mailing options include guaranteed overnight Express Mail Service or Flat Rate Priority Mail service at just \$12.95 that can be delivered in just two to three days.

Take Me Out to the Ball Game

The stamp image is based on a circa-1880 “trade card” from the personal collection of art director Richard Sheaff of Scottsdale, AZ. The original card shows a baseball scene and contains words promoting a product made by a Michigan company. The stamp art shows the same scene but replaces the product-related words with “Take Me Out to the Ball Game,” the stamp denomination, notes from the music, and the words “United States of America.”

For decades the song’s catchy chorus has been part of the musical tradition at ballparks around the nation, especially during the seventh-inning stretch. The song was born on a New York City train in the summer of 1908, when passenger Jack Norworth (1879-1959) — an actor, singer and songwriter who had never attended a major-league ball game — saw a sign about an upcoming game at the Polo Grounds. Suddenly inspired, he took out a piece of paper and began dashing off lines about a fictional fan he called Katie Casey (Nelly Kelly in a 1927 version of the song). Katie “was baseball mad,” he wrote, and when asked by her beau to a show, this was her reply: “Take me out to the ball game / Take me out with the crowd. . . .”

Norworth took his lyrics to composer Albert Von Tilzer (1878-1956), who had also never been to a major-league game. Von Tilzer set the words to music (a waltz tempo), and the York Music Company published the song the same year. Among the earliest recordings were renditions by the Haydn Quartet and singer Edward Meeker, both in 1908.

The original, handwritten lyrics of Norworth and Von Tilzer’s most celebrated collaboration now reside among the treasured collections of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum at Cooperstown, NY.

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An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 146 million homes and businesses, six days a week. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services, not tax dollars, to pay for operating expenses. The Postal Service has annual revenue of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world’s mail.

Pitch In For Baseball, www.pitchinforbaseball.org, is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization based outside Philadelphia, PA. The mission of Pitch In For Baseball is to improve the social, physical and emotional well being of children through the game of baseball. Since 2005, Pitch In For Baseball has delivered new and gently used baseball and softball equipment to underserved children in more than 100 communities around the United States and more than 50 countries worldwide. For more information, contact Executive Director David Rhode at drhode@pitchinforbaseball.org or 215-371-2841.