



For Immediate Release: December 8, 2008

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Local Businessman Spreads Cheer - One Baseball at a Time

Special care package for the troops inspires the new “Baseball Around The World” program

When Stoneham, MA resident, **Ciro Whooley**, heard that his family was putting together a care package for his cousin, **Mike**, stationed in Iraq, he knew he wanted to include something that would be a true reminder of home. For **Whooley**, a financial consultant and founder of the website ballclub.com, something baseball related was a natural choice. “My cousin is from New York and grew up a big Yankees fan and from my first game at Fenway watching **Yaz** playing in the outfield, I have been a Red Sox fan – we may be fans of two rival teams, but what we have in common is a love of the game,” said **Whooley**.

And so, in order to bring the game and a bit of home to his cousin and the others stationed at his base, **Whooley** got together enough used baseball equipment to field a team, including baseballs, bats, gloves and a catcher’s mitt, and sent it off to **Mike**’s Second Battalion Sixth Marine Regiment.

The care package received rave reviews from Iraq. “For the few times of down time, it gave me and the guys a chance to feel a little closer to home” according to **Mike**. Since then, **Mike** has come home and joined the New York Police Department, but the baseball equipment stayed in Iraq continuing to be used for pickup games by the next group of guys in his platoon.

The package and the reaction it received, inspired **Whooley** to create the “Baseball Around The World” program. Through the program, hosted since November on ballclub.com, people are encouraged to donate used-but-usable baseball equipment that **Whooley** will process and send to other military bases, as well as children and children’s organizations in need throughout the world. People who participate in the program and make a donation of usable equipment receive a souvenir baseball of their favorite major league team from **Whooley** as an acknowledgement of their good deed. “I think it’s a great way to spread the love of the game and it’s even “green” since we are finding a thoughtful and unique option for recycling used equipment,” says **Whooley**.

Donations have already started to come in and Whooley looks to dramatically grow the program over the upcoming months.

Ballclub.com is the online source for baseball related gifts and novelties and is the home of both the Baseball of the Month Club and the "Baseball Around The World" program. Launched in 2005, the site offers hundreds of unique baseballs and baseball themed items aimed at making shopping and gift giving for the baseball fan fun and exciting. For more information please contact Ciro Whooley by telephone at 781-696-3404 and by email at cwhooley@ballclub.com, or visit the website at www.ballclub.com.

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