

Kiwanis pledges \$300,000 for Miracle Field

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Kiwanis Miracle League at Prospect Meadows

The motto for all the Kiwanis Clubs on the international stage is “Serving the children of the world right here at home.”

The local Kiwanis Clubs in Marion, Cedar Rapids and Hiawatha have embraced that motto right here in Linn County by pledging \$300,000 for naming rights to the new Miracle Field at Prospect Meadows.

The Miracle Field will give children and people of all ages with disabilities the opportunity to play baseball on a field that’s being built specifically for them, with a cushioned rubberized surface, wheelchair-accessible dugouts and a completely flat surface to eliminate barriers.

Byron Tabor, a member of two local Kiwanis Clubs, is serving as president of the Kiwanis Miracle League at Prospect Meadows, and he’s delighted that his organization will have its name permanently attached to the Miracle Field, which will be the only one in our area.

Tabor has seen people playing on the Miracle Field in Des Moines, a facility that has served as a model for the facility at Prospect Meadows.

“It’s about helping the kids,” he said. “Once you see it happen, the absolute pure joy those kids have is joyous to see.”

The Miracle Field will be located just inside the entrance to Prospect Meadows in a prime location.

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“Our kids are going to be right by the front door and everybody who walks by is going to see our kids,” said Tabor. “I’m looking forward to that. It’s going to be exciting.”

The Kiwanis Clubs plan to organize a series of games on the Miracle Field, beginning with an exhibition game on Saturday, June 22. Ultimately, they plan to have a spring season from April through early June and a fall season in August and September.

The Kiwanis Club members will be actively involved as volunteers for the games. They are looking for additional volunteers in the community. Anyone interested in helping can contact Tabor at btabor12@mchsi.com.

Camp Courageous of Iowa, located in Monticello, also plans to take full advantage of the new opportunities that will be available to their clients at Prospect Meadows. Camp Courageous serves more than 8,000 individuals with disabilities on a year-round basis, and they’ve had clients as young as one year old and as old as 105. They had 9,333 campers in 2018, but their facility in Monticello does not have a baseball or softball field.

Charlie Becker, the executive director at Camp Courageous, hailed the Kiwanis Club support of the Miracle Field as “great news” for people with disabilities. He plans to load up the bus and bring as many campers as possible to Prospect Meadows, which is located about 30 miles from Monticello.

“I think it will be a big thrill, because we don’t have those opportunities here,” he said. “This is going to be a great opportunity. It’s something new and exciting and we can take advantage of it.”

The Kiwanis Clubs had already pledged \$150,000 to the Miracle Field. Now they have pledged another \$150,000 to the facility. One of their major fundraising projects will be their annual barbeque that will be held at Lowe Park in Marion on Saturday, June 1 from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. with free admission, bands, events and terrific food.

Tabor said the Green State Credit Union, formerly known as the University of Iowa Credit Union,

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has made a major donation to the Miracle Field and will be the presenting sponsor. He also said the Kiwanis Clubs will be selling banners to be displayed at the Miracle Field to help raise money for the project.

Prospect Meadows, located near the corner of Highway 13 and County Home Road north of Marion, plans to open this spring with eight regulation baseball fields and the Miracle Field. Tabor is confident the Miracle Field will be warmly received by the community.

“This is a great addition to that baseball complex out there,” he said. “I think it’s going to get a lot of attention.”

The Kiwanis organization features approximately 8,600 clubs with 315,000 members in 83 countries.