



Winter 2018

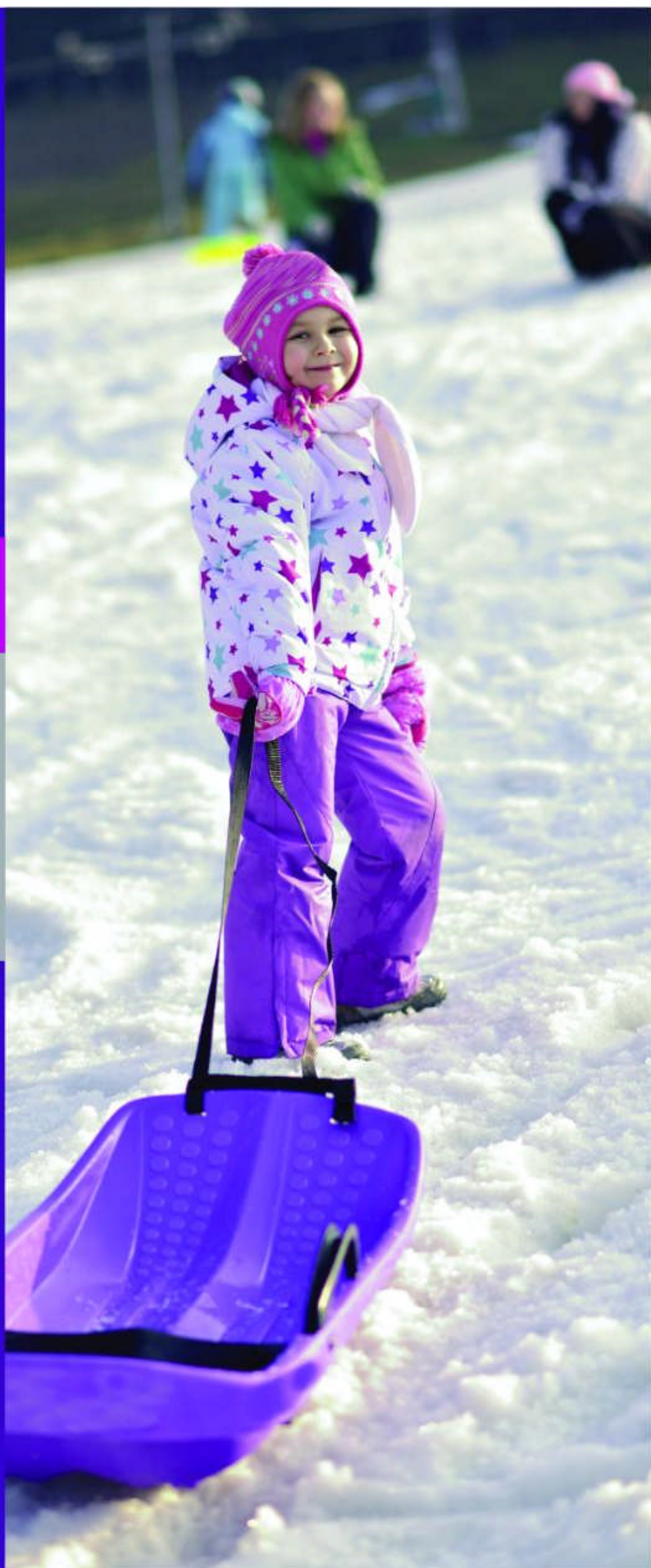
SAVE THE DATE

**MRPA Annual
Conference
March 18-20, 2018**

**The Samoset Resort
Rockport, Maine**

Official Publication
of the Maine Recreation
& Park Association

merpa.org



The Russell Packett

Memorial Youth Sports Scholarship

*Russell Packett was a long-time parks and recreation professional who worked in Yarmouth, Freeport and Cape Elizabeth between 1993 and 2017. He was the creator and director of the 130-team travel basketball league for kids in grades 5-8 in Southern Maine. He also served as the treasurer for the Maine Recreation and Parks Association for many years. He was passionate about youth sports and promoting training for professionals in the field. **The scholarship will be awarded to a current MRPA member to further develop his/her training or education specifically in youth sports.***

As of January 1, 2018 we have received \$2965.00 in memory and honor of Russell. The application for this scholarship is available at: <http://www.merpa.org/page/967/>



Donations may be mailed to MRPA

PO Box 6728

Scarborough, ME 04070

2018 MRPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW

MARCH 18-20, 2018

SAMOSET RESORT ROCKPORT, MAINE

Here's a link to register for the conference and to reserve a room at the Samoset

<http://www.merpa.org/page/943-714/mrpa-spring-conference>

Check out the MRPA web site for complete session descriptions!

Sunday, March 18

6:00 - 9:00 pm -Mystery Event!

Monday, March 19

8:00 am Registration Begins

8:00-9:00 am Breakfast

8:00-8:30 am Students Meet in the State of Maine Hall

9:00-10:15 am Educational Sessions

- ♦ Technology Update: Getting Started with Google Docs
- ♦ Expand your game bank: The Machias Sequel
- ♦ Keep 'Em Playing: Building Engaging Youth Sport Experiences

10:15-10:55 am Break With Exhibitors

11:00-12:15 PM - Educational Sessions

- ♦ Invasive Plant Management
- ♦ The ACA—Is it still relevant?
- ♦ Unified sports in your community

12:15-1:50 pm Lunch & Annual Business Meeting

MRPA Annual Meeting & Recognition of MRPA Past Presidents - including Exhibitor Prizes

2:00-3:15 pm Educational Sessions

- ♦ Creating Sustainable Academic Internships
- ♦ Bidding Laws: Maximize your budget
- ♦ Autism Society of Maine

3:15-3:30 pm Students Meet in the State of Maine Hall

3:15 - 4:00 pm BREAK WITH EXHIBITORS

4:00 - 5:15 PM KEYNOTE

ACHIEVING VISION BEYOND SIGHT

5:15 - 6:15 pm Exhibitor Social - Drinks & Appetizers

6:45 - 8:30 pm Annual Awards Reception and Raffles

8:30 - 10:00 pm Social Event

2018 MRPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW

Tuesday, March 20

7:30-8:30 am Continental Breakfast

8:30-9:45 am Educational Sessions

- ♦ Teens: Doing It Right at Trekkers
- ♦ Don't Sell Yourself Short: Highlight the Importance of Your Department
- ♦ Inclusive Playgrounds for Your Parks

9:50- 11:05 AM Educational Sessions

- ♦ Develop Better Leadership Skills Using Improvisation
- ♦ Are you Emergency Response ready?
- ♦ Revolving and Enterprise Budgets: A tool to make you great!

11:15-12:30 pm Endnote: Julia Sleeper-Whiting, Executive Director, Tree Street Youth

EXHIBITORS AS OF JANUARY 29, 2018

Adventure Bound
Amtrak Downeaster
Beaverbrook Tennis LLC
Blast Party Rentals
BSN Sports
Central Maine Pyrotechnics
Cranmore MT. Resort
Funtown Splashtown USA

Maine Tennis & Track LLC
Milone & MacBroom, Inc.
Musco Sports Lighting
MyRec.com
Northeast Charter and Tour Co
Ulti Play Park & Playgrounds



Thanks!
for your
Support!!

MRPA TRACK & FIELD PROGRAM

“The mission of the MRPA Track and Field program is to provide a quality recreation program where children have fun and are introduced to physical fitness through basic track and field events such as running, jumping and throwing.” Find all of the program details at:

<http://www.merpa.org/page/944-794/futurestars>

2018 REGIONAL MEETS

Northern Maine

Date: TBA at Caribou HS

hosted by Caribou P & R (contact Matt Bouchard at 493-4224)

GOLD SPONSOR



Central Maine

Date: TBA at Cameron Stadium in Bangor

hosted by Bangor P & R (contact Tim Baude at 992-4490)

BRONZE SPONSOR



Southern Maine

Date: TBA at South Portland High School

hosted by South Portland P & R (contact TBA)

2018 MRPA STATE MEET

Cameron Stadium, Mt. Hope Avenue

Tentative Date: Tuesday, July 10, 2018

Registration begins at 10:00 am/field events begin at 11:00 am

hosted by Bangor P & R (contact Tim Baude at 992-4490)

MOVERS AND SHAKERS...PINKHAM'S ENERGY IS CONTAGIOUS

By Donna Buttarazzi



KENNEBUNK — Tasha Pinkham has had a busy first year as director of the Kennebunk Recreation Department.

She's been on the job for a little over a year, and has taken an already vibrant, thriving, department to a new level with additional programs and new responsibilities. And she's not slowing down.

"She has tremendous drive and energy," Town Manager Mike Pardue said of Pinkham. "She's leading from the front, and her energy is contagious."

With the dissolution of the Downtown Committee and membership on the Festival Committee dwindled down, the Recreation Department took over two major town events this year — Harvestfest in the fall, and the downtown Christmas tree lighting. Pinkham has also taken over the Healthy Maine Streets "Healthy Kennebunk" Program, and expanded it to include not only exercise, but healthy eating and kindness goals for participants.

"I love that we added the random acts of kindness piece," Pinkham said. "Kindness is what matters the most." Pinkham is also in charge of the programming and events at the four town-owned recreation facilities, the youth community center at Park Street, Town Hall Auditorium, the Dorothy Stevens Center in West Kennebunk, and the Waterhouse Center. She also oversees the training and schedules for the crew of volunteers who serve as Zamboni drivers during the skating season at the Waterhouse Center.

All of those duties are in addition to the heart of the Recreation Department — the programs offered year-round to residents. Kennebunk Recreation offers over 700 — 704 to be exact — programs throughout the year for newborns to senior citizens and everyone in between. "I took over a high quality program to start, and we have grown it even more," Pinkham said. From the swimming program at Quest Fitness which offers a "Water Babies" class for parents and infants, to senior shopping trips, youth pickle ball, stretching and toning classes, wiffle ball, jazz band, and the ever popular Nerf Nights there really is a rec program for everyone. Pinkham is quick to credit her staff, and the support of Pardue, for making a big job easier. "I surround myself with good people, and I'm grateful for that," she said.

Pinkham will take on yet another duty when the RSU 21 Adult Education enrichment classes move to the Recreation Department. Pinkham said she will keep the classes that are currently offered for now, and then will work to streamline with other similar rec offerings and tweak things as needed. She's excited for the challenge and the opportunity to offer even more to Kennebunk residents.

Pinkham lives the philosophy of the recreation department "don't vegetate, rec-reate" in her personal life as well. "I try to live what I preach," Pinkham said, relating her experience of completing a triathlon with her daughter recently.

Pinkham and her husband have six children, so adventure and activity are a part of her life both on and off the job, and she wouldn't have it any other way.

Her hands on, roll up your sleeves and pitch in approach to the job inspires those around her, according to Pardue, and she doesn't ask anyone to do something she wouldn't do herself.

"She's intent on making a difference and supporting others," Pardue said. "She exemplifies the nucleus of the employee base here at town hall."



The United States Tennis Association recognizes that you are introducing tennis, along your other great sports and activities, to the next generation of players in your communities. As the game's governing body, the USTA is committed to helping you grow your tennis community.

This year, we have introduced **Net Generation**, the new youth tennis brand from the USTA. It was designed with YOU in mind. Net Generation can expand your programs, make your job easier, and provide recognition for your efforts; all at **no cost**! These easy to use resources and tools can be sculpted and put into place by you.

BENEFITS TO YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY

- [Joining Net Generation](#) gives you an easy-to-follow curricula and tools that are customizable and collaborative as well as additional benefits:
 - A print or online suite of teaching materials to help build your tennis plans
 - **A Net Generation equipment starter kit that includes a digital and print community manual, apparel, equipment roller bag, 20 youth racquets (21"), 36 red felt balls,**
 - **2 rolls of barrier tape, and a box of chalk**
- A free listing at www.netgeneration.com (searchable by consumers)
- ◆ Opportunities to partner with local schools
 - ◆ Digital communication and support including updates, tips, and guidance
 - ◆ National and section marketing support to promote Net Generation and find local programs
 - ◆ Free participation for coaches at Net Generation training workshops led by the USTA
 - ◆ Free online and in-person training

Provider registration is now open. [Register for free](#) and join the Net Generation today. Help us **shape the future of tennis**! If you have questions or want to learn more, contact your local Tennis Service Representative,

Eric Driscoll driscoll@newengland.usta.com

TEACHER GETS BATH KIDS ON A (BIKE) PATH TO FUN AND WELLNESS

Teacher Lawrence Kovaks recently won a coveted grant from the Specialized Foundation — the only school in Northern New England to receive one of 20 this year — which gifted RSU 1 with 25 mountain bikes as the foundation for Bath Middle School's "Riding for Focus" program, created by the foundation. "And cycling is a life-long activity. They are really going about everything the right way. The bikes are high-quality, and they provide excellent curriculum to teach cycling skills. We have tools and supplies for maintenance.

Not one to sit still, Kovaks next applied for — and won — a \$2,705 grant from the Bicycle Coalition of Maine to create a "pump track" for bikers in the community. Located between the Bath Skate Park and Bath Middle School, the looping mountain bike track is comprised of dips and banked curves to be negotiated by the biker on sheer momentum — no peddling needed, once you get going.

Bath Parks & Recreation Director, Steve Balboni and some of his staff joined Bath students to begin construction of the pump track



ARE YOU AN MRPA VIP?



The Mission of the VIP Program is to increase membership participation in all aspects of the MRPA by providing an incentive plan that will reward members for their professional efforts and recognize members for years of service, involvement and contributions to the MRPA. The plan will encourage current MRPA members to continue their individual career growth and dedication to the field of Recreation and Parks.

The VIP will recognize MRPA members who annually achieve these goals and accomplishments:

- Recruiting NEW professional and commercial members to the Association
- Joining the MRPA and/or renew annual membership
- Serving on the Executive Board
- Serving on MRPA Committees
- Participating in MRPA Programs and Events
- Reading job-related books (must submit book review for newsletter)
- Attending job-related conferences/trainings (MRPA and non-MRPA)
- Speaking/Presenting/Facilitating at job-related conferences/trainings (MRPA and non-MRPA)
- Participating in other job-related efforts
-

HOW DOES THIS WORK? The calendar year starts each year at the MRPA Annual Meeting. MRPA members begin tracking their VIP points and turn in their VIP form to Deb Smith by February 28, 2018. Necessary documentation must be included with your VIP form.

SO WHAT'S THE PRIZE? One Grand Prize Drawing of \$250.00 for a professional development experience of your choice will be awarded annually to the MRPA member who has the highest number of VIP points as of February 28, 2018. (No cash value and non transferable to another MRPA member). The member VIP points will be verified by the MRPA Board of Directors. MRPA members who earn at least 5 VIP points will be entered into a special VIP drawing at the 2018 MRPA annual meeting. You must be present at the MRPA annual meeting in 2018. There will be two prizes drawn. The grand prize winner with the most points will not be included in this drawing.

HOW ARE VIP POINTS TRACKED? MRPA members are responsible for tracking their own VIP point activities and submitting them on the VIP Tabulation Form, with the required documentation, by the specified deadline of February 28, 2018. The VIP Committee will review your tabulation and may grant VIP points for any miscellaneous activities you list for consideration...see the Tabulation Form for details.

GET INVOLVED! Don't sit back and say "What has the state association done for me?" The more people involved in the MRPA... the bigger, the better and the more it can do for you and for all of us!

COUNT ME IN! Check out the VIP Tabulation Form so that you know what activities will give you VIP Points. Start a VIP file today and make a list of your activities as you do them. Got questions? Contact: Deb Smith, Executive Director of MRPA at executivedirector@merpa.org

Here's a link to the VIP tabulation form

<http://www.merpa.org/page/946-796/mrpavipprogram>

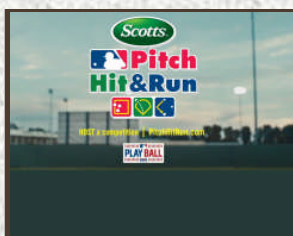
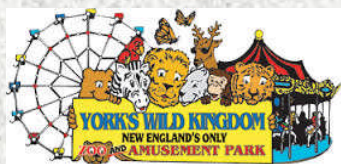
2017 MRPA SUMMER TICKET PROGRAM

Thank you to MRPA communities that sold discount tickets this summer. Huge thank you to Kate Harris for all of the time spent coordinating this program for MRPA.

Watch for 2018 ticket program details late spring.

MRPA communities sold:

- ♦ 8447 Funtown Combo tickets
- ♦ 267 Splashtown tickets
- ♦ 1177 Aquaboggan tickets
- ♦ 860 York Wild Animal Kingdom tickets



Scott's Major League Baseball Pitch Hit & Run (PHR) is a FREE, exciting skills event providing boys and girls the opportunity to compete in four levels of competition including Team Championship events at all 30 Major League ballparks and the National Finals at the MLB All-Star Game. **Host a local competition** for your community and be involved in the official skills competition of Major League Baseball!

MRPA REGIONAL

PITCH & HIT RUN COMPETITIONS

CONTACT MRPA PITCH HIT & RUN COORDINATOR

TYLER STEWART FOR DETAILS

284-3989 or tstewart@oobmaine.com

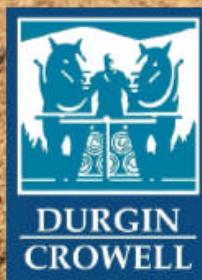
MARCEL BLOUIN RETIRES

After 42 years in the Parks and Recreation business Marcel retired earlier this month. Marcel started his career in Millinocket in 1976 and finished it in Sanford, Maine. He was surprised by friends and family celebrating his successes! Congratulations Marcel!



Safety Fiber

All-natural Engineered Wood Fiber



Durgin and Crowell Lumber
603-763-2860

www.durginandcrowell.com
jonbaker@durginandcrowell.com
Certified Playground chips
ASTM F1292, ASTM F2075 & ASTM F1951-14
Delivered anywhere in New England

MRPA SCHOLARSHIP PROVIDES FIRST TIME NATIONAL CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE!

My name is Linda Brooks, and I have been employed by the Town of Windham as the Parks and Recreation Director since June, 2015. Having graduated from college in 1983, I had a few different positions within the Therapeutic Recreation realm as well as the Recreation Coordinator in Sanford before finally securing my position as Director of Parks and Recreation in Standish, where I worked for 21 years. After 34 years in the profession, I applied for the scholarship funding that MRPA makes available to its members and attended my first NRPA Conference in September 2017. For those of you who aren't quite sure about this, it turns out you can teach an "old dog" new tricks, and I benefitted greatly from participating in this conference!

The 2017 NRPA Conference essentially allowed me to cross a few things off of my bucket list, starting first with this item: ***Attend a national conference.*** For those of you who have not attended a national conference, I highly encourage you to find a way to get there. The Scholarship offered by MRPA will certainly help to offset the cost if you are concerned about taxing your department budget, and I found there was so much to bring back to share with staff and the two advisory committees that I am currently working with. Before arriving to the conference, I received regular correspondence from the conference committee, along with an app for my phone to enhance the experience. (You guessed it... an old dog learning new tricks!) I did manage to download the app and discover all of its benefits, including the ability to filter sessions to search for topics that were of interest, create my own custom schedule, evaluate sessions and access resources that the speakers were sharing. Both Celebrity Apprentice/ "American Ninja Warrior" host Matt Iseman (google him – you'll know him!) and Comedienne Jessica Pettitt delivered motivating keynotes and reminded us why we do what we do, and why we love it. The speed sessions gave me the opportunity to learn a little bit about a lot, and the regular conference sessions offered something for everyone.

The second item that I crossed off of my bucket list was: ***Visit New Orleans.*** In August 2005, New Orleans was devastated by Hurricane Katrina, which has been considered the worst urban disaster in modern U.S. history. While in New Orleans, I visited the Sanchez Multi-Service Center, which is located in the Lower 9th Ward - one of the neighborhoods hardest hit by Katrina. The community center was rebuilt in 2015 – 10 years after the previous community center along with many neighboring houses were destroyed. I am currently working with a committee trying to build a community center for Windham. Touring this small yet vibrant multi-service center, rebuilt just ten years after it was destroyed, and talking personally with the staff was equally as beneficial as many of the conference sessions I attended.

The final item that was crossed off my bucket list with this venture was: ***Attend an NCAA Division I football game in which at least one of the teams has won a national championship.*** When traveling to another part of the country for a national conference, if you can possibly manage to use vacation time to extend your visit, this is one more way to elevate the over-all experience. The Alabama – Ole' Miss game held in Tuscaloosa, Alabama was not an overly exciting game (Alabama: 66 – Ole' Miss: 3), but for those of us in the Parks and Recreation profession, the logistics involved in pulling off an event of this caliber are amazing. Being in Tuscaloosa on game day is a case study in field and facility maintenance, traffic control, transportation alternatives, selling "your brand", crowd control, risk management, party planning, infrastructure design... the list goes on. Sometimes when we aren't involved in running the activity, it is great to sit back and watch what others do - there are always some new tricks to take back to the office with you.

I want to thank the MRPA Board and the Scholarship Committee for selecting me as a scholarship recipient this year. My experience in New Orleans was invaluable, and I now know it won't be my last national conference.

MEMORY, CRIBBAGE, ISOLATION-ELDERS & YOUTH

Ken Capron, MemoryWorks...207-797-7891 kcapron1@maine.rr.com

MemoryWorks I started in 2013 to support and advocate for seniors, especially those with memory concerns. That objective has led to a lot of creativity about how to keep seniors from becoming isolated and help keep their minds sharp. It's also important to put good information in the hands of seniors and those who care for them so they can make informed choices.

In 2017 I started a statewide effort around cribbage because cribbage is clearly good for mental acuity and there are a lot of seniors who play the game in various forms. It is also one way to provide seniors with the opportunity to socialize with others in their communities. MemoryWorks is very interested in spreading the word statewide about the benefits of cribbage. If you know of any gatherings where cribbage is played on a regular basis, I will list it on our website and Facebook for all the World to see.

To increase awareness, I also started a statewide cribbage tournament as a fundraiser for our work at MemoryWorks. Any Mainer can play. It's only \$25 per entry. I plan to do this every March and September, along with some special events like a 'Cribbage Cruise' and the 'Battle at the Border'. In our first such tourney in September, numerous seniors came out to play and interact with community members. There are several Recreation programs that run weekly cribbage games, like Waterboro, Lewiston and Wiscasset. And the turnouts are amazing. Cribbage has been one of the best kept secrets in Maine. It's everywhere.

I am also trying to develop a second project – one that connects teens with seniors. I discovered a program that already exists on a limited basis for high school kids. It's called the Youth Action Team and is a product of the Major League Baseball Players Trust. Brunswick High School has one of these Action Teams. It has grown to 60 students in just a few years. Their Action Team interacts with seniors at various VOA facilities. That means they visit several senior residential facilities several times every year. Sometimes they go to play games from Connect 4 to Wii Bowling. They often do a Trivia game where the students try to stump the seniors while the seniors try to stump the teens. It's a riot with lots of humor and bonding. Equally as often, the Action Team will prepare a meal for the residents. They buy the food, cook it and serve it with smiles. All this time, these students are learning life skills.

MemoryWorks would like to grow the program so that more seniors can benefit. We'd eventually like to build teams that can help with chores like mowing, raking and shoveling in addition to socializing with elders in their home neighborhoods. Many of us remember our younger days when we would play cards with the grandparents. Whether it's cribbage or canasta, it's bonding with otherwise isolated seniors in our communities.

I got a grant in 2017 to help with the growth of the program but with an even greater opportunity. I'd like to get training for Action Teams in the art of Search and Rescue. Knowing that seniors go missing almost weekly, it would be fantastic to have teams of students who are trained in SnR and available on a moment's notice year-round.

Youth Action Teams learn to operate on their own with just a little help from one or two dedicated Adult leaders. As a reward, the team gets a free trip to a Major League game – at Fenway – every year. They also get t-shirts and a rare chance to meet MLB players.

I would like to invite you to consider both the Cribbage and the Youth Action Team for your community. I can come and talk with your organization. Cribbage info can be found at CRIBBAGE.ME. Youth Action Team info is available at playerstrust.org or <https://www.facebook.com/ActionTeam/>

"Through the Players Trust, Major Leaguers contribute their time, money and celebrity to call attention to important causes affecting the needy and to help encourage others to get involved in their own communities. Each year the Players Trust distributes more than \$1.5 million in annual grants and programs, and inspires hundreds of thousands of high school students to volunteer in their communities through the Action Team national youth volunteer program."