

LNP Sports 365: Schreiber Softball Weekend a Lancaster County tradition

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Upwards of \$65,000 in 2011. More than \$50,000 in 2008. \$48,000 in 2003. \$51,000 in 2000.

Year in and year out, the Schreiber Pediatric Rehab Center's annual Softball Weekend is a Lancaster County success story. And it's that time again. Play — 48 hours of it — will commence at Mountville's Froelich Park at 6 p.m. Friday.

Day 155 of the LNP Sports 365 project is tipping the cap to all the years of fundraising the charity event has completed since its 1983 inception, and features three photos from Weekends past. They include:

- From the wet, muddy 2003 event in Stauffer Park, after slipping past the bag, Chris Grove slides back to third base as Jessica Grazan tries to keep her balance.
- At the opening of 2011's festivities, Barbara Cavanaugh and Tristan Haas, son of Matt and Becky Haas of Lancaster, speak with members of team Urgent Care. Cavanaugh, a staff member at Schreiber Pediatric Rehab Center of Lancaster County, introduced Tristan to the team, one of 54 to participate in that year's benefit marathon.
- At the 1996 Weekend, Schreiber Pediatric Ambassadors Kyle Kauffman, 5, left, and Stephanie Mastriana, 5, were getting into the spirit of softball.



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After slipping past the bag in a wet, muddy 2003 Schreiber Pediatric Softball Weekend game in Stauffer Park, Chris Grove slides back to third base as Jessica Grazan tries to keep her balance.

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As with each year's event, Friday's first pitch kicks off 48 hours of play that will benefit thousands of children with special needs that the organization serves each year. The rules are that teams of 12 to 16 players must raise a minimum amount of money to compete. They can choose a three-hour time slot to play against a team of the same skill level or participate in Sunday's tournament play and complete for the trophy — and, of course, bragging rights.

Spectators are welcome.

The Schreiber center provides therapy, recreational programs and a preschool for more than 4,000 children and adolescents in Lancaster County. On average, for every \$1,000 raised, one child can receive a year of service.

One team in particular has become a Schreiber Softball stalwart: the Manheim Struggling Farmers.

The Farmers team was organized in 1988 by Barry Geib, who sought to grow the number of teams the event was drawing. Geib recruited his brother, Earl, and 14 others from the farming or agri-business community to form the new team. A year or two later, the group toured the Schreiber facility and saw how children were being helped.

“It really fired us up to see what we could do through Softball Weekend to help raise funds for the Center,” Earl Geib told the Intelligencer Journal in 2006.

The Farmers are consistently among the event's top fundraisers. They hold no practices, either. As Earl Geib said in '06, the team's philosophy is that “it doesn't matter if we win the ballgame, it matters that we raised money to help the children.”

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As always, we invite our readers to get in on the game, too. If you have a shot from Lancaster's sporting past or present — a baseball team, something from a swim meet, maybe a community 5K — feel free to share it with us. Just email a jpg file of the shot and some background info (like who's in the picture and what the event is) to lthompson@lnpnews.com or to the sports department at sports@lnpnews.com, and we'll consider it for inclusion.