



October 3, 2024

Dear Mayor and Council of Cambridge,

On behalf of Challenger Baseball Canada, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for Buddy League Challenger Baseball and their initiative to create a fully accessible ball field at Riverside Park. This facility will provide a vital space where athletes can feel safe, included, and celebrated.

Challenger Baseball offers children, youth, and adults with cognitive, sensory, and physical disabilities the opportunity to engage in organized baseball tailored to their abilities. With the help of dedicated buddies, each player receives the encouragement and support necessary to thrive on the field.

Many athletes in the Challenger Baseball program face mild to severe mobility challenges and rely on wheelchairs, walkers, or prosthetics. The development of accessible fields is crucial for enabling these individuals to participate in sports and physical activities. Such inclusive spaces foster increased participation, enhance overall enjoyment of the program, and prioritize safety for all players.

I would like to share our personal experience with building an accessible ball field. As the coordinator for Antigonish Challenger Baseball in Nova Scotia, I have seen firsthand the positive impact that an accessible field can have. In 2015, we embarked on a journey to create our own field - The Sandlot. This process took approximately four years, culminating in the field's opening. A pivotal moment in our fundraising efforts was securing a \$150,000 Jays Care Foundation Field of Dreams Grant. Before this support, we had raised only a small percentage of the required funding. The endorsement from Jays Care Foundation and the Toronto Blue Jays lent credibility to our project, inspiring many to contribute and get involved.

Since the completion of The Sandlot, it has become a hub for various organizations, including Challenger Baseball, minor baseball and softball, local slo-pitch leagues, Special Olympics, schools, and community groups. We have successfully hosted numerous events, such as the Atlantic Challenger Baseball All-Star Series and the Eastern Canadian Softball Championships. These events would not have been made possible without the accessible field.

Challenger Baseball Canada fully believes that the creation of an accessible field in Cambridge would similarly enrich the community, boosting participation in sports, especially for Challenger Baseball and minor baseball and softball.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. Thank you for considering this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Randy Crouse

Randy Crouse
National Coordinator, Challenger Baseball Canada
Provincial Coordinator, Nova Scotia Challenger Baseball
Coordinator, Antigonish Challenger Baseball