

SWR grads come together to remember a Friend and improve the program he loved

by Brynn Manning

A gleaming score board, manicured lawn, stands for the spirited fans, plaques to commemorate successful players, and a pathway leading to these beautiful surroundings—this is not a description from the field of dreams, but a realistic picture of what the SWR boys' baseball field will look like by the end of the 2002 season. These improvements will be made by the Williams family in order to commemorate their son Kevin, who was killed in the 9/11 tragedy.

In 1995, Kevin Williams graduated SWR High School a successful, well-respected student. Williams, an accomplished athlete, offered tremendous heart to all his teammates as well as to the sport of baseball. Kevin's family and friends are determined to help his intense passion for baseball and life live on.

The Williams family, along with Kevin's fiancé Jillian Volk, who also graduated from SWR, discussed numerous ideas to help Kevin's spirit prevail. They felt that the best place to honor Kevin's memory would be in SWR, the community that has been so generous to them and their son.

"We needed to do something," said Kevin's mother, Mrs. Sherry Williams. "We wanted to make sure it started here so people right in our own community will benefit from this."

With the help of numerous contributions from family and friends to the Kevin Williams Memorial Fund, the Williams' wishes to share Kevin's love for baseball have been granted.

The Williams' have set aside money to help children follow through with their baseball dreams. They are planning on using these funds to set up camps and provide equipment for those who may need financial help obtaining it. The family hopes to be able to continue setting up camps to benefit

young athletes for years to come.

With the tremendous help and generosity offered by Priority Landscaping, the additions to the boys' baseball field should be complete by the beginning of June.

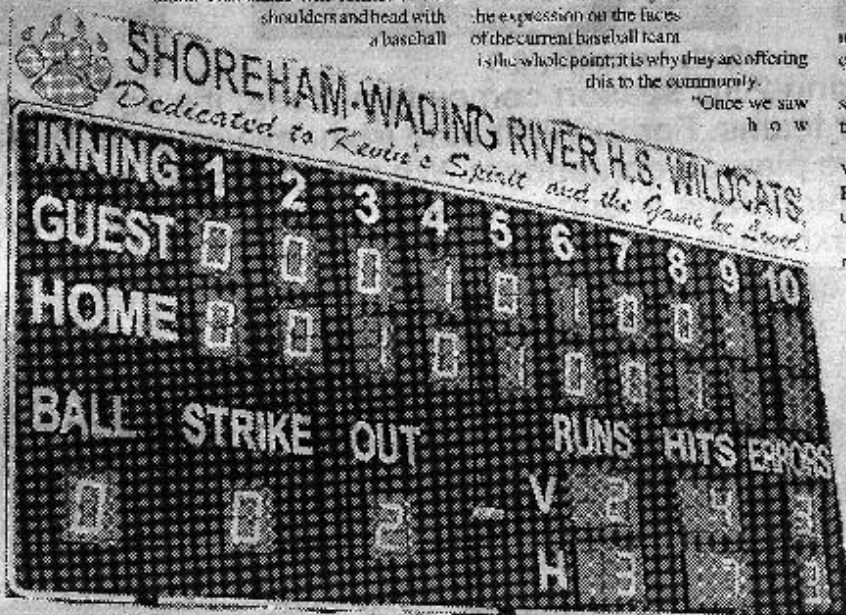
The additions include a new scoreboard with a surrounding garden, bleachers placed down the first base line, a haulder with a plaque commemorating Kevin's spirit, and a statue similar to those seen at Yankee Stadium. This statue will consist of the shoulders and head with a baseball

base. The Williams family went to the field later on that evening to take a look and to their surprise, the whole baseball team, who had just returned from a game, walked in behind varsity baseball coach Mr. Sal Mignano to see the new scoreboard.

In the Williams' eyes, the expression on the faces of the current baseball team is the whole point; it is why they are offering this to the community.

"Once we saw how

"Kevin loved baseball, and he loved his Yanks, but most of all he loved life." -Jamie Williams



The new scoreboard on the varsity baseball field is in memory of 1995 graduate Kevin Williams.

Photo by C. Cook

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happy it made the boys, it made us feel so good," said Mrs. Williams. "Everyone wants to be a part of this," said Mrs. Williams. "Everyday, people walk into local stores and ask what they can do to help," she added.

Based on the success of fundraisers that have taken place, this type of support will continue. Friends and roommates of Kevin, including Brian Baumsteter, have set

up one night fundraisers at bars and comedy clubs.

Matt Detleff, a close friend of Kevin's since kindergarten, is organizing a fishing trip, another of Kevin's passions.

Recently, Kevin Hago, sister of Jillian Volk, along with friend Alison Cahill, ran the Boston Marathon for Kevin and raised \$3,000 dollars for the fund.

Keith Osik, a former SWR graduate who now plays for the Pittsburgh Pirates, also wanted to do something for Kevin and organized a raffle. The donations of many, including bicycles from the Nims family in Wading River, who own a bicycle shop, helped raise \$1000 dollars for the memorial fund.

"Everyone's generosity is making it easy for us to do good in Kevin's name," said Mrs. Williams. "We plan on making additional improvements to perpetuate Kevin's spirit. It will be as if Kevin is helping out."

It is not coincidental that the type of activities that were set up to raise money are ones that Kevin would have loved to participate in. His friends and family are taking the parts of life Kevin enjoyed most and helping his spirit live on by carrying them out.

The Williams family hopes that what young children and student athletes take from all the contributions to the baseball field and the organized camps for young players is an appreciation for how much of life is learned from the game. Kevin put his heart into everything he did, and the way he played the game of baseball is proof. In the words of Kevin's brother, Jamie Williams, "Kevin loved baseball, and he loved his Yanks, but most of all he loved life."

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