



PRESS RELEASE

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MEIJER DONATES \$1 MILLION TO MEIJER SPORTS COMPLEX EXPANSION CAMPAIGN AS LEAD GIFT

West Michigan Sports Commission Announced \$5.8 Million in Donations Spurred by Meijer Contribution, Bringing Project to 53 Percent of \$11 Million Project Goal

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Aug. 3, 2023 – The [West Michigan Sports Commission \(WMSC\)](#) announced today that a \$1 million lead gift by [Meijer](#) toward the Meijer Sports Complex’s [A Winning Streak for West Michigan expansion campaign](#) was the catalyst to generate additional gifts, bringing the fundraising total to \$5.8 million, or 53 percent of its \$11 million goal. Based on funding to date, some elements of the project could begin in late 2023. The announcement was made at a private donor event at the Meijer Sports Complex.

“Meijer invests in the communities we serve – and as a family company, supporting youth and amateur sports is so important to us because of the joy it brings families. That is why we have partnered with the WMSC for more than a decade on everything from the State Games to the naming of this community staple,” said Meijer President & CEO Rick Keyes. “We’re honored to help the Meijer Sports Complex continue providing a safe place for young people of all abilities to play, now and into the future.”

The WMSC launched the \$11 million [A Winning Streak for West Michigan capital campaign](#) in October 2022 to improve and expand its flagship [Meijer Sports Complex](#) that it opened in 2014 with eight baseball and softball fields, a championship baseball field and Nate Hurwitz Miracle League Field. Costing \$7.5 million and funded through private donations, the complex has cumulatively attracted 148 travel events, 7,500 teams and 243,750 visitors, for a total economic impact for Kent County of \$52 million in direct visitor spending.

“We are so grateful to Meijer for this generous lead gift, which made it possible for us to reach more than half of our fundraising goal to improve and expand the Meijer Sports Complex,” WMSC President Mike Guswiler said at today’s event. “Equally important, we were able to leverage that gift when speaking with others in the public and private sectors to demonstrate the importance of the project and motivate others to give.”

Guswiler, along with Meijer Regional Vice President Shawn Buckner, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Vice President and Winning Streak Campaign Co-Chair Nick Davidson, Congresswoman Hillary Scholten, Campaign Ambassador of Baseball and former Detroit Tiger Lance Parrish, Progressive AE Principal and WMSC Board Chair Jim Horman, and Campaign Co-Chair Deb Kay, spoke to the invited guests at the donor event at Championship Field of the Meijer Sports Complex.

Also announced were donors who have pledged in response to Meijer’s gift, including Secchia Family Foundation in memory of WMSC Founder Peter Secchia, DeVos Family Foundations, Jandernoa Foundation, UFP Foundation, Mercantile Bank, Lacks Enterprises, Mary Free Bed Guild, Reagan Marketing and an anonymous donor, as well as the full WMSC board and Winning Streak campaign cabinet. Additionally, \$1 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars was allocated by Kent County Board of Commissioners, and Congresswoman Hillary Scholten requested \$750,000 in Community Project Funding to the House Committee on Appropriations for fiscal year 2024.

“These generous gifts were made possible because Meijer took the first step in demonstrating the value of this project – we are so appreciative of Meijer and these donors who gave in response,” said Guswiler. “The Meijer Sports Complex fills a critical need for championship-caliber infrastructure for sports like baseball and softball in West Michigan, and the demand for this kind of space that also offers gender parity with softball diamond fields has only increased. We’re excited to take the complex to the next level for athletes playing everything from baseball and softball to pickleball – and we can do that thanks to the support of Meijer and these other donors. We hope others here today see the value and join the cause.”

Lance Parrish, the campaign’s Ambassador of Baseball, spoke about the project’s benefits to the community and youth of West Michigan. “A donation to this campaign is an investment in our kids,” said Parrish. “This is a great opportunity to provide a state-of-the-art facility for our youth to compete at and enjoy for years to come.”

The expanded complex will use acreage south of the complex and is estimated to accommodate 200 more teams annually and generate an additional \$1 million in annual visitor spending. The renovation and expansion includes:

- New championship softball field for youth, amateur and collegiate softball – featuring synthetic turf, grandstands, lighting, covered dugouts and a press box
- Three flexible-use diamond fields for youth and amateur baseball and softball as well as collegiate softball, with covered dugouts and bleachers
- 20 pickleball courts, including a championship court
- New concession building, new restroom facility, and expanded storage facility
- New playground area
- Canopies over all bleacher seating
- Synthetic turf installed on existing Championship baseball field
- Resurfacing of the Miracle Field
- 300 additional parking spaces

Jim Horman, chair of the WMSC and a principal at Progressive AE who is providing architectural design services, gave an overview of the project and timeline, including news that construction will begin as early as this fall on the improvement portion of the project with the existing funds raised in order to leverage current labor and material costs. This initial phase will include installing synthetic turf on the championship baseball field, resurfacing the Miracle Field and adding 300 parking spaces. The main groundbreaking phase for the new championship softball field will take place in early 2024 following fundraising continuing throughout 2023.

Co-chaired by National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Vice President Nick Davidson and WMSC Board Member Deb Kay with support from Lance Parrish as the campaign’s ambassador of baseball, the Winning Streak capital campaign kicked off in October 2022 and will continue through 2023. More information can be found at westmisports.com/winningstreak.

About the West Michigan Sports Commission

The non-profit [West Michigan Sports Commission](http://WestMichiganSportsCommission) (WMSC) identifies, secures and hosts youth and amateur sporting events to positively impact the economy and quality of life in the region. Since its inception in 2007, the WMSC has booked 1,095 events attracting more than 1.9 million athletes and visitors, generating more than \$557 million in direct visitor spending. Visit westmisports.com, Facebook.com/WestMichiganSportsCommission and @westmisports on Twitter and Instagram.

About the Meijer Sports Complex

A flagship project of the West Michigan Sports Commission, the [Meijer Sports Complex](http://MeijerSportsComplex) is a championship-caliber baseball/softball complex near Rockford featuring eight baseball and softball fields, including the 385-foot fenced Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation Championship Field with covered grandstands to seat 1,000 spectators; Nate Hurwitz Miracle League Field for children with disabilities; warm-up areas, restrooms, concessions and maintenance building; and parking for more than 400 vehicles. Since opening in 2015, the complex has attracted 148 travel events, 7,500 teams and 243,750 visitors for a total economic impact for Kent County of \$52 million in direct visitor spending. Visit meijersportscomplex.com.