

NEWS

Play It Forward

Jessell family donates LED scoreboard to Miracle Field.

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GAZETTE PACKET

Daniel Jessell was only 21 when he died unexpectedly in 2018. The Florida native loved baseball and as his parents searched for a way to honor their son, they came across an online video of the Miracle League of Alexandria. The rest, as they say, is history as the Jessell family was on hand for the Sept. 7 dedication of the LED scoreboard for the Kelley Cares Miracle Field in honor of Daniel and his aunt Loey Seligman.

“Dan didn’t just like baseball, he loved baseball,” said Daniel’s father Mark Jessell at the dedication ceremony. “He was a better than average player and the thing he loved most was running the bases. He would do anything in Little League to get on first – hit by a pitch or square up on a 3-1 count to bunt to throw the pitcher off. Dan figured if he could get to first, he could probably get to second then third.”

The Jessell family donated the new LED scoreboard to the Miracle League of Alexandria in memory of Daniel Jessell and Loey Seligman, who died in 2020. More than 100 people were in attendance as the scoreboard was dedicated, including Mark and Sheri Jessell and their son Robert from Florida, and Loey Seligman’s widower Howie Seligman from Massachusetts.

“Through the generous gift donation to the Miracle League of Alexandria by the Jessell family the scoreboard was purchased and installed,” said MLA board chair Mac Slover. “The scoreboard will allow for videos, pictures and scoring that will enhance the experience for players in the Miracle League, as well as for others who use the field.”

The Miracle Field is a rubberized surface baseball diamond designed specifically to allow wheelchairs and walkers to be used in a safe and pleasant environment to play sports. The field is geared towards baseball, but many other sports and activities can be played on it.

The donation began with a Jessell family holiday tradition.

“During the holidays, Sheri and I



Miracle League of Alexandria board chair Mac Slover, kneeling center, is surrounded by players and volunteers at the Sept. 7 dedication of the new LED scoreboard at the Kelley Cares Miracle Field.

PHOTOS BY JUSTIN SLOVER



Sheri Jessell holds a poster dedicating the LED scoreboard in memory of her son Daniel and sister Loey Seligman. With her are Howie Seligman, left, Mark Jessell, second from right, and a Miracle League team player.



Photos of Daniel Jessell and Loey Seligman are shown on the new LED scoreboard at the Kelley Cares Miracle Field dedication Sept. 7 at the Lee Canter.



A new LED scoreboard was dedicated at the Kelley Cares Miracle Field Sept. 7 in memory of Daniel Jessell and Loey Seligman.

would come up with three charities and invite each of our kids to pick one they would like us to donate to on their behalf,” said Mark Jessell. “Two years ago, my son Robert chose the Miracle League from the three. On an internet search, Sheri came across the Miracle League of Alexandria’s COVID-19 video and she proceeded to cry ... a lot. She sent the \$50 donation.”

MLA received a \$50 donation from the Jessell family in the 2023 Spring2ACTION fundraiser. Slover

corresponded with the family and invited the Jessell’s to attend the Annual National Miracle League All-Star game in 2023 which was being held in West Palm Beach, not far from their home.

“Experiencing that event and seeing the passion and compassion of Mac and other volunteers, the enthusiastic support and cheering of parents, friends and relatives, and the players’ pure joy was extremely moving. We were hooked,” Mark Jessell said.

Sheri Jessell’s sister, Loey Seligman, was a math teacher for 35 years. When she died in 2020 she left a sum of money to be used to honor her nephew’s memory.

“When we asked Mac how we could get more involved, the idea of a scoreboard came up,” said Sheri Jessell. “It was the perfect way to honor Loey’s legacy. It will enhance the players’ and fans’ experience, while allowing us to remember Dan and his love of the game as well as Loey’s generosity and kindness. It’s

a win-win.”

In attendance at the dedication were elected officials, Miracle League participants and their families, and members of the city’s Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Activities. The Alexandria City High School Volleyball teams served as the game’s “Angels in the Outfield” Buddies to the players while the Alexandria Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity served food following the ceremony and game.

“Sheri and I want to thank everyone who made this moment possible,” said Mark Jessell. “Mac, Bill Rivers, Miracle League board members, the many volunteers; members of Alexandria City Council; contractors and workers who designed, built and Simpson Development who installed the scoreboard; the parents, friends and community. Finally, a special thank you goes out to the Miracle League of Alexandria players for your participation and enthusiasm.”

Sheri Jessell ended the dedication with, “Remember love and kindness wherever you go and always, always ‘Play it Forward.’”

Following the speeches, the scoreboard was revealed with the pictures of Daniel Jessell and Loey Seligman on the video screen and the words “Love and Kindness – Play it Forward” at the bottom of the scoreboard.

“In 2012, we had a Miracle dream come true with the construction of the Kelley Cares Miracle Field and again in 2024 another Miracle dream has come true with the installation of the scoreboard,” Slover said. “I feel our participants and the City of Alexandria have truly been blessed by the love and kindness of people like the Jessell Family. They will be forever a part of our Miracle League family and in the history of the City of Alexandria.”

The Miracle League games are held on Wednesdays and Saturdays in the fall and spring at the Kelley Cares Miracle Field, located at 1108 Jefferson Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. For more information, to volunteer or to donate, visit www.miracleleagueofalexandria.com or contact Mac Slover at mac.slover29@outlook.com.