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Local Sports

A great cause



Chronicle, Peter McCabe
RALPH AMBROSINO makes play at second during Sian Bradwell tourney.

By **Andrew Raven**
The Chronicle

Take 34 teams, five parks, dozens of volunteers, some sports memorabilia, a great cause and what do you get?

The answer is the 13th Annual

Sian Bradwell Softball Tournament, one of the largest annual charity sporting events in the West Island.

To date, it has raised over \$500,000 for the cancer ward and hematology clinic at the Montreal Children's Hospital.

The tournament is dedicated to the memory of Sian Bradwell, the daughter of Ken and Sharon Bradwell, who died from a rare form of cancer in 1986.

"I spent many nights with Sian in the hospital and I saw first hand that they needed equipment," said tournament co-founder Sharon Bradwell.

"Softball is such a popular sport that we thought this would be a great way to help the hospital."

The proceeds of the tournament will be used to purchase essential equipment, such as cardiac

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monitors, automatic blood pressure machines, microscopes, wheelchairs and a host of other devices.

"It's a great cause," said organizer Steve Wordsworth. "It's wonderful to see the whole community come out and support the hospital like this. We get donations from regular people, gifts from companies that we can auction off and support from the mayor and city councillors."

Kirkland Mayor John Meaney, along with several councillors, was on hand to make medal presentations and observe the action.

"I remember the first year when there were only a couple of teams and one park. Now there's a huge group," he said.

In fact, the tournament has expanded to include five parks in Kirkland and Pierrefonds and 34 teams from various men's leagues and companies, who compete in three categories; the open division, 35 and over and mixed division.

"I think the tournament is so large because it combines a popular sport like softball with an important cause," said volunteer co-ordinator Claire Campbell.

"It's a mammoth effort that requires a lot of planning, but in the end, it always turns out well," added Wordsworth.

A large part of that effort is acquiring sports memorabilia for the auction that was held on Saturday night.

Up for grabs were collectibles such as a pair of bats signed by the Expos' Vladimir Guerrero and Jose Vidro, a Patrick Roy autographed goalie stick, a jersey signed by Dallas Mavericks' forward Steve Nash, and a football autographed by the Montreal Alouettes.

And by the time the frenzied bidding was complete, the auction had raised over \$3,000.

On Sunday afternoon, organizers held another auction that included merchandise donated by several local companies.

They also raffled off a weekend in Toronto that included a pair of tickets to a Raptors and Leafs game along with two nights at a downtown hotel.

Organizers won't close the books on the event until October, but they hope to exceed last year's total of over \$33,000.

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"Last year, we actually went backwards a little bit, so this year we're hoping to top \$40,000," said Campbell.

Sharon Bradwell said she has another goal.

"I hope this tournament continues long after I do," she said.

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