

**Mikail R. Russo**  
**(More Opportunities for NEighborhood Youth)**  
**MONEY Athletic Foundation**

2005 Annual Newsletter

### **Another Successful Year, Thanks to our Sponsors**

The **MONEY** Athletic Foundation and its scholarship recipients owe their thanks to our many loyal supporters. Due to the generosity of individual donors and the community sponsorship of the Annual Home Run Derby, the Foundation has helped 40 individual young athletes and two area teams attend camps, purchase equipment, and travel to compete with others in 2005.

Individual donations totaled \$5,553 (this included a \$1,500 contribution from United Mid-Coast Charities) and the Derby raised \$6,300. The Board of Directors awarded \$10,944.23 throughout the year, for an average award of \$267. In the last four years, **MONEY** has given over \$41,755 to mid-coast athletes in memory of Mikail.

Awards were given to athletes from the following area towns: South Thomaston, Cushing, Lincolnville, Belfast, Hope, Camden, Rockport, Swanville, Searsmont, Warren, Freedom, Liberty, Albion, Rockland, and Appleton. The various scholarships allowed youth from the area to hone their skills in such athletic pursuits as soccer, karate, gymnastics, tennis, field hockey, wrestling, basketball, football, baseball, and ice hockey.

In addition to helping kids have fun while improving their athletic skills, the Foundation

gives many an opportunity to learn important lessons about teamwork, community, and themselves. Several of this year's recipients traveled to overnight camps held at colleges and universities throughout the state. Such exposure is sure to heighten their aspirations to one day attend a similar place of higher learning.

Other athletes had the opportunity to travel to various parts of the country to measure their skills. An area AAU Girls Basketball team traveled to Florida, as did an individual field hockey player. Still others



were allowed the experience to travel and compete in Maryland, Connecticut, and Minnesota. None of this would have been possible without the kindness of the community members who support this worthy cause.

Therefore, thanks again to all who helped us in our achievements in 2005. In 2006, we look forward to increasing community awareness of our mission. Heading into our 5<sup>th</sup> full year, we hope – aided by your continued support – we are able to award more grants to even more deserving candidates.

### **The 4th Annual Home Run Derby**

More than 60 participants of all ages stepped to the plate for the fourth annual Mikail R. Russo **MONEY** Athletic Foundation Home Run Derby. The rains stopped long enough to allow the contestants to hit ball after ball over the fences at Mazzeo Field in Rockport last May 29<sup>th</sup>.

Wade Oliver of Rockland District High School led the way in the high school division; Mykel Calloway of Camden-Rockport Middle School captured the middle school division, and Paul Russo blasted the most home runs in the adult division.

Each local school participant was asked to sell a minimum of ten raffle tickets to enter the derby competition. In the spirit of giving, the person who sells the most tickets, thereby contributing the largest donation to the Foundation, is awarded four box seats to the Boston Red Sox donated by Rick and Ann Bresnahan. The team that has the best overall sales receives 22 tickets to the Portland Sea Dogs' Ted Williams Skybox donated by Bruce Micucci of Micucci Wholesale.

This year to accommodate the middle school entries, the field sported three separate fences. A ball that was struck hard enough to fly over the first fence scored one point, the second fence two points, and the third fence three points.

**May your New Year be filled with kindness, warmth, and love!**

Each middle school athlete was given ten swings in the first round, ten in the second round, and due to the closeness of the competition, another five swings in the third round. Area participants included Zach Dufour, Chris Watts, Mykel Callaway, Larson Platt, Gordon Fischer, Taylor Gartley, Matthew Shields, Crosby Johnson, Kiefer Lammi, Michael Crockett, Morgan Baxter, Asa Peats, Andrew Baxter, and Joey Nelson.

Gartley, Callaway, Watts, Dufour, Platt, Fischer, and Shields made it to round two, while Callaway, Watts, and Gartley moved on to the final round. Callaway came out on top with the most homeruns, but Watts of Lincolnville had the honor of selling the most raffle tickets in the middle school division for the event, raising \$375 for the cause.

High school contestants included players from the Rockland, Medomak Valley, Georges Valley, and Camden Hills baseball teams. Tom Kennedy of Medomak Valley sold 98 tickets winning the four box seat tickets to the Red Sox. His great salesmanship helped the Medomak team win the 22 Portland Sea Dogs tickets.

Contenders in the high school division included the aforementioned Oliver and Kennedy, as well as Andrew Rogers, Michal Cummons, Chris Mitchell, Noah Burke, Miles Davee, Matt Judkins, Steve McGuire, John Coppola, Nate Ayotte, Andy Ferrier, Zack Durkee, James Merrifield,

Thomas Woodman, Logan Rackliff, Ben Baudanza-Sturks, Matt Rector, Dominick Morrill, Jared Simmons, Matt Taylor, and Jake Hall.

The top ten moved on to round two. Oliver, a Rockland high school senior who is presently attending St. Joseph's College in Windham, is a four year participant and the winner of the event in 2003. He blasted to the top of the pack scoring 21 points (four eruptions over all three fences, a total of nine for the event!). He not only overcame last year's winner Judkins, but surpassed Cummons, Coppola, Kennedy, Rogers, Mitchell, Davee, Burke, and McGuire.

Even though the skies had deeply darkened, volunteers and spectators who donated \$20 entered the open. Roger Jones, Lowell Jones, Karinna Russo, Stephen Goodridge, Jacob Murray, Seth Crockett, Ian Doherty, Chelsea Russo, Rick Johnson, Ed Crockett, Andrew Russo, Nate Moore, John Russo, Ted Graffam, Paul Leeper, Ben Curll, Paul MacDonald, Matt Cates, Marshall Smith, Brian Fitzpatrick, Steve Hiller, J.D. Rainey, John Petersdorf, Steve Russo, Shawn Hiller, Jason Peasley, Keagan Russo, and Paul Russo all took ten cuts.

Rainey, the defending champ who traveled the furthest to compete, came up short as Paul Russo extinguished his hopes of a repeat. This coming year's battle, tentatively scheduled for Memorial Day Weekend, is sure to include these two battlers and hopefully many more.

It is worth noting and reaffirms the Foundation's

mission that many of the middle and high school participants in this event have also been recipients of scholarships from the Foundation. It is wonderful to see them give back to the community in the hope of helping other deserving athletes.

Obviously, none of this could be done without the dedicated group of people who volunteer at the event and provide the numerous and wonderful raffle prizes. The local businesses, individuals, and organizations that contributed to the Derby Raffle include: Camden River House; Bayview Lobster; Wild Rufus; Camden Bagel Café; Atlantica Restaurant; Owl & Turtle Bookstore; Chris Van Dusen; Whale's Tooth Pub; Penobscot YMCA; Jay Carlsen; The Samoset Resort; Peter Ott's Restaurant; Fay Morrill; Waterfront Restaurant; P.G. Willey; McMahan's Restaurant; MBNA; Jessie's Pies; Brad Scott; Camden Irving; Youngtown Inn; Fitzpatrick's Café; Rockport Lobster; South End Grocery; Steve Reynolds; Gordon Best; Rockland Golf Club; Goose River Golf Club; Maine Gold; Eastern Mussel Farm; and Party Fundamentals.

Also deserving thanks are the T-shirt sponsors; Camden Custom Embroidery for the derby hats; Americorp Volunteers and others who helped on the field and in the food tent; and those who contributed food, drinks, and ice.

To see derby photos and read testimonials from scholarship recipients, please visit our website.

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO HELP LOCAL YOUTH SUCCEED**

*The address to send your tax-deductible dollars to is:*

*MONEY Athletic Foundation*

*50 Bull Hill Rd.*

*Hope, ME 04847*

*Susan McIntyre of Hope updated and manages the website – be sure to visit*

*[www.moneyathleticfoundation.org](http://www.moneyathleticfoundation.org)*