

Hannaway's first pitch a winning moment at Mainers game

Thursday, August 4, 2011

SANFORD — After a short rain delay on Monday, July 25, the sky cleared and the excitement began for the employees of Waban Projects and their families, who were at Goodall Park that evening to enjoy a Mainers game.

It was Waban Day at the park.

The Sanford Mainers peeled back the protective rain cover and exposed the infield, so the game against the Old Orchard Beach Raging Tide could begin. Everyone in Goodall Park stood up, and with baseball caps removed and hands on hearts, listened to Elizabeth Flynn and Lydia Corcoran, both 11 years old, sing the national anthem.

Afterwards, Waban Executive Director Neal Meltzer helped Tim Hannaway in his wheelchair to a spot on the infield, where he threw the first pitch to Sanford Mainer A.J. Bazdanes. Bazdanes caught the ball and returned it to Hannaway as a souvenir of the game. Hannaway was surprised when the manager from the Old Orchard team came over and offered him a bat as a keepsake.

The smile on Hannaway's face said it all as he held up the ball and waved to his friends applauding in the stands.

Waban's employees had a great time right alongside the Sanford Mainers' regular fans, cheering the game as it got really exciting around the fourth inning with the Mainers taking over the lead. Waban employee and Goodall Park staff member Pete Lieberman encouraged his Waban co-workers and their children to toss water balloons, spin hula hoops and participate in hilarious and entertaining between-inning contests. They also helped with tossing baseballs and t-shirts into the stands.

Myron Kurtiak, Waban's director of human resources, said, "It's a small, but meaningful way to recognize staff and their families for making a difference each and every day. We look forward to hosting similar events in the future and definitely going out to another ballgame next season."

For more than 40 years, Waban has been providing services to children and adults with developmental disabilities. In those years, Waban has expanded to serve and employ an ever-growing group of individuals.

Waban purchased more than 300 tickets to provide the opportunity for all employees and their families to attend the Sanford Mainers baseball game. The icing on the cake was that the Mainers won that night.



Tim Hannaway, center, a resident of Waban in Sanford, accepts from A.J. Bazdanes the baseball he threw out as the first pitch during the Sanford Mainers' recent game against the Old Orchard Beach Red Tide at Goodall Park. At left is Waban Executive Director Neal Meltzer. courtesy photo