

Going to bat for 'Roberto's Kids'

By JENNIFER WIELGUS

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He's gearing up for his final baseball season at Council Rock-North High School and deciding whether to walk on at Michigan, accept a sure spot at Emory or keep holding out for Harvard. But Beau Tremitiere spends most of his time thinking about boxes.

Filling boxes. Transporting boxes. Storing boxes. And finally, sending boxes of bats, balls and gloves to less-fortunate kids.

This is Beau's personal take on the so-called "senior project."

It actually started as his father's project, called "Roberto's Kids," in honor of Roberto Clemente. As a boy growing up in York, Steve Tremitiere idolized the late Pittsburgh Pirates star, and five years ago, Steve decided to honor Clemente's philanthropic spirit by collecting gently-used baseball equipment and donating it to poor communities in Latin America.

Steve filled an 18-wheeler with his first collection around Newtown. He resurrected the project this winter, with Beau leading the way.

"When my dad started this, I definitely wanted to help, but I was only 12 or 13, and I didn't take on that big of a role," says Beau, 18, a right-handed pitcher for CR-North's varsity team. "I was kind of a worker bee, and I would clean and sort the equipment, but I didn't really get involved in the logistics at all. That's what I really enjoyed this time around."

Beau recently set up collection boxes at all the elementary and middle schools in the Council Rock district. Baseball equipment (gloves, bats, balls, catcher's gear, bases, batting helmets, cleats, sneakers and uniforms) can be donated at the schools through March 2. Other collection points are at the Newtown Athletic Club and its next-door neighbor, Jeff Manto's Baseball and Softball Academy.

According to Steve, most of the equipment will be sent to fill requests from communities in the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Mexico and even some parts of Africa. Some equipment will go to programs in the United States.

Steve says he probably enjoys collecting for "Roberto's Kids" as much as those kids enjoy receiving the equipment. He especially enjoys sharing the project with his son.

"Just watching him drive all over Bucks County, picking up boxes, getting people to donate printing and all sorts of things, it's really neat," Steve says, "because he really has done it all on his own."

Beau says he'd like for "Roberto's Kids" to continue growing throughout the Delaware Valley. Toward that end, he has reached out to local media for publicity and enlisted the help of some of his CR-North teammates.

This typically is a selfish time for soon-to-be high school graduates. But "Roberto's Kids" has helped Beau stave off senioritis.

"A lot of people could just stay self-centered and focus on themselves, but for me, this has been really neat," Beau says. "I played baseball in Newtown for 12 years, and I really enjoy being able to link baseball and the community and really giving back. I feel like it's a good opportunity, and I'm having fun. So I guess there is some selfish gain in the project."