

Roberto Clemente Day held at PNC Park

Event celebrates the life and legacy of Pirates' Hall of Famer

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PITTSBURGH -- Pirates Charities hosted its "Roberto Clemente Day of Giving" on Friday at PNC Park.

Non-profit groups from Pittsburgh and the surrounding areas set up tables up and down Federal Street, along the ballpark's left-field wall, to celebrate the life and community-service legacy of Clemente, the Pirates' Hall of Fame right fielder.

Among the groups participating were the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh, Gilda's Club Western Pennsylvania, The Josh Gibson Foundation, Life's World of Western Pa., and Make-A-Wish Foundation of Greater Pa. and Southern West Virginia.

"It's great," said Roberto Clemente Jr., who was on hand to help kick off the festivities. "It's a little overwhelming sometimes, but it's something that's part of his legacy that he left us. We're very grateful that fans have Clemente in their hearts and they still feel the love for him."

Clemente Jr. also took part in a pregame ceremony to hand out the team's Roberto Clemente Award, given to a member of the Pirates who combines outstanding skills on the field with devoted work in the community. This year's award was given to shortstop Jack Wilson.

Roberto's Kids, a non-profit organization that provides baseball equipment to youth in Latin America, also participated on Friday, handing out information and accepting equipment from fans.

"It was the idea to really make Clemente Day as meaningful as we could, because Roberto played here his entire career," said Patty Paytas, the Pirates' vice president of community and public affairs, as well as the executive director of Pirates Charities. "We invited our community partners. These are organizations that we worked with in various capacities. We wanted to give them the opportunity to distribute information to fans coming to the ballgame."

Pirates Charities and the American Red Cross also had volunteers stationed on Federal Street and near all ballpark entrances to collect monetary donations from fans for the recent hurricane relief efforts. Every fan who made a contribution received a "21" button in appreciation.

