

# Teen collects baseball gear for kids

Thursday, January 25, 2007

By Janice Crompton, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A family dinner on Christmas Eve gave Andrew Paul, 16, the idea to combine his love of baseball with a desire to help others.

He was inspired by family talk of the need for volunteerism.

Andrew, a Peters Township High School sophomore, hit the Internet and found "Roberto's Kids," a collection program designed to deliver new and gently used baseball equipment and clothing to children in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

An initiative between the Baseball Hall of Fame and the family of the late Roberto Clemente, the program immediately appealed to Andrew, who has played baseball since the age of 5.

A Hall of Fame member, Clemente was a star right-fielder for the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Since then, Andrew has been on a collection frenzy, thanks largely to baseball groups in Upper St. Clair and Bethel Park. He collected 386 baseball jerseys, 114 uniforms, 64 new caps and 163 pairs of socks. He also collected bats, gloves, spikes and helmets.

Andrew said assistance from baseball officials Rick Murray, of Upper St. Clair, and Jim Krally, of Bethel Park, has been essential in getting the word out to players, who can drop their items off during registration or at the Peters Library or at the township fire hall on East McMurray Road.

Before registrations began, Andrew e-mailed coaches throughout the South Hills, asking them to mention the program to their players.

A member of the high school baseball team, Andrew also plans to collect during his team registration over the next two weekends, although the proceeds will be split with another player who is collecting for another organization.

Andrew's mother, Mary Kay Paul, said her basement has been all but converted into a warehouse for sorting baseball equipment. Her husband, Duke, was a coach, and sons Andrew and Steven played, so her family donated about 20 jerseys, along with spikes and gloves.

Andrew said he plans to continue collecting until the end of February, when the items will need to be shipped to Philadelphia for processing.