

## **PT student pushes charity drive**

By Denise Bachman, November 7, 2007

Andrew Paul can be considered a seasoned veteran when it comes to donating items to Roberto's Kids, a collection program named after the late Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente.

Earlier this year, Paul solicited donations of new and gently used baseball and softball equipment for children in the United States, Africa and Latin America.

Now, the Peters Township High School junior is collecting shoes - all kinds of shoes - on behalf of Roberto's Kids in the Dominican Republic. Shoes can be donated through Nov. 30.

"It's kind of hard to play baseball without shoes," said Paul, who is an avid baseball fan and a center fielder and pitcher for the Indians.

"It's not just shoes for baseball," he said. "They just have to have shoes."

The shoes can be slightly used, and all styles and sizes are needed.

Steve Pindar of Oneonta, N.Y., along with Steve Tremitiere of Newton, collaborated with the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Clemente's family to establish Roberto's Kids.

For several years, Pindar and Tremitiere had been collecting and distributing equipment independently to Latin American countries.

In 1999, Pindar started the Baseball Equipment Project in the Dominican Republic with a single donation from the Oneonta Little League. By 2005, the Pindar family had collected five tons of equipment for Dominican children.

Meanwhile, Tremitiere was collecting tons of equipment from eastern Pennsylvania and central New Jersey for the Roberto Clemente Sports City Complex and other organizations in Puerto Rico.

Today, Roberto's Kids operates in 26 states and three provinces in Canada.

"Roberto's Kids does a lot more than provide baseball equipment. It provides a sense of hope in a world of despair," Pindar said in a telephone interview from his New York office.

Paul learned of the need for shoes when Pindar told him kids routinely show up for baseball clinics in bare feet. Pindar remembers handing out cleats at a supervising station in the Dominican Republic when he realized how quickly the process was going.

It wasn't long before he figured out why: The kids had no shoes to take off before trying on the cleats. In the middle of the distribution, he turned to his wife and said, "We have to take a step back.

"I don't want to minimize the point of the baseball equipment, but the shoe drive has a positive effect on young and old alike, men and women," Pindar said.

A donation drive organized by a baseball mom in Chicago netted 2,000 pairs of shoes; a lifelong friend of Pindar's managed to collect 1,500 pairs.

"Nothing would thrill me more than for Andrew to call me and say, 'Steve, I have X number pairs of shoes,'" Pindar said. "I know he loves this type of work, doing something like this for someone who has literally nothing."

Paul will make sure the shoes are delivered to Pindar, who, in turn, will deliver them during a trip to the Dominican Republic in the spring. Paul would like to accompany Pindar on the trip, but he'll be in the middle of the Indians' baseball season.

This time around, Paul also has enlisted the help of the entire school district. Each school in the district is serving as a collection site, as well as the Peters Township Recreation Center.

Members of the high school's National Honor Society have volunteered to monitor the school sites, and Paul is in charge of the rec center. All donations eventually will end up at Paul's house.

"I've been sending e-mails, and I'm getting help from others," he said.

Paul also is seeking transportation donations so the shoes can be shipped or delivered to Pindar in New York.

For more information or to donate transportation to New York, e-mail Paul at [spoon1213@hotmail.com](mailto:spoon1213@hotmail.com).