

## **‘Roberto’s Kids’ Expands Into Nicaragua**

By: LAURA COX, Hometown Oneonta



**Children who received baseball equipment during a “Roberto’s Kids” distribution in the Dominican Republic line up for a photo showing off their “new” equipment.**

The Oneonta-based charity, “Roberto’s Kids,” marked a milestone on Saturday, March 7, as they filled trucks with one ton of baseball equipment and to be shipped immediately to Nicaragua for distribution amongst the children.

The organization, which started in 1999 with a donation from the Oneonta Little League, collects used baseball equipment – anything

from cleats and jerseys to gloves, bats and balls, anything having to do with baseball – and donates it to youth in need of equipment, particularly throughout the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and parts of Africa.

Inspired by Roberto Clemente’s legend, and with his families’ blessing, the charity was named Roberto’s Kids in 2006 when it joined forces with a similar organization based in Pennsylvania.

The Roberto’s Kids website quotes Clemente about the need to give a helping hand: “We need to show love and to love, not only our kids and our family as a whole but also our neighbors. We’re all brothers and sisters, and we must give each other a helping hand when it is need.”

Last year alone, 20 tons of equipment was shipped to the Dominican Republic, where it was distributed to thousands of children in worthy leagues, churches, orphanages and schools.

“We have never turned down a request,” said founder Steve Pindar of Oneonta, “the economic downturn is not only affecting us, but people worldwide, and requests show that this year. We have had an increase in requests particularly in the U.S. from inner city regions and American Indian Reservations.”

But even with requests up, Pindar is not too worried about filling them, as donations have

not dipped. Part of this is explained by the general wear and outgrowing of equipment by the hundreds of youth baseball teams across America, as well as many of the Minor League Baseball teams. Plus community equipment drives are held by many organizations each year to benefit Roberto's Kids.

Many of the youth teams that come to Cooperstown to play baseball each summer come with cars full of extra equipment to donate.

The new Oneonta Tigers General Manager, Andrew Weber, has agreed to team up with Roberto's Kids to promote equipment drives at games throughout the New York-Penn League.

As the country eases into full-blown baseball season this spring, Roberto's Kids hopes that people don't forget about the players who are in need of all the old bats, balls and gloves piled up in the garage or the outgrown uniforms from last season and they think about the children all across the world whose joy it would be to receive these old relics. More information about the Roberto's Kids organization or how to donate items can be found at their website, [www.robertos-kids.org](http://www.robertos-kids.org).