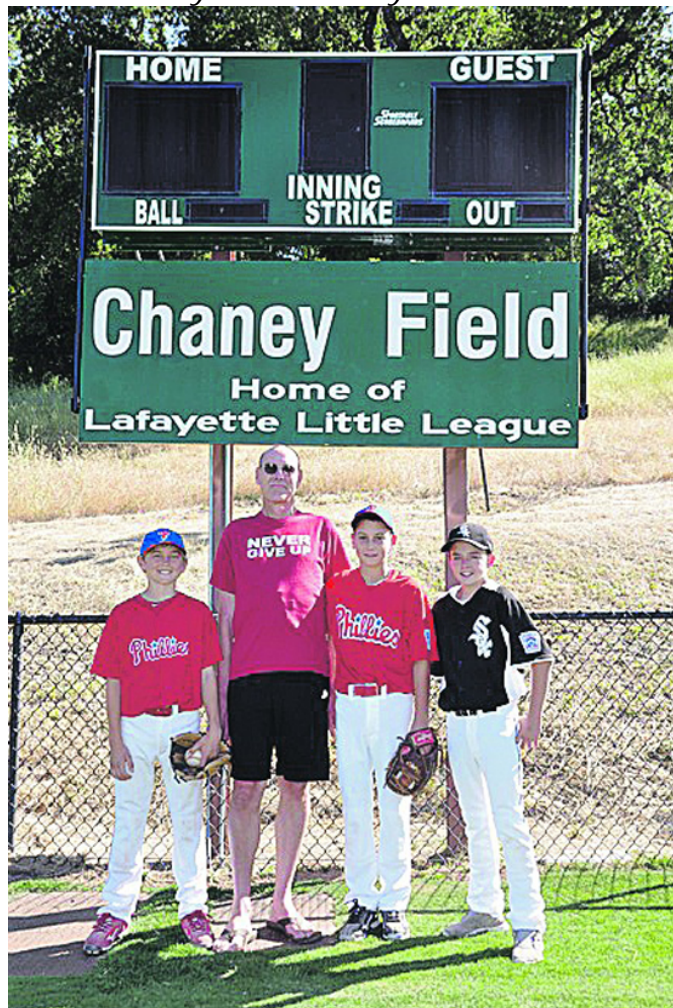


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Lafayette's Young Athletes Hit Home Run for ALS

Submitted by Jenica Lancy



From left, Matty Vicencio, Tyler Ewing and Michael Bone, with Matt Chaney at their Little League field

presented Chaney with a photo book and a set of thoughtful notes.

"This was simply amazing. All of this was organized by the students," Chaney said. "I was completely and overwhelmingly surprised when the bleachers on the lower field were filled with students and they presented me with a giant donation on a giant check! I am so very touched by their generosity and support.

"A special thanks to Cole Brightbill, Justin Bocks, Cooper Davis and Nick Broback for creating and organizing this amazing campaign and Barbie Bocks and Dawn Brightbill for overseeing the boys' efforts and catching me completely off guard. Thanks also to Mrs. Rodriguez's second grade class for their spare change campaign that raised \$340 for the Ride." This effort was organized by Chaney's 7-year-old nephew Keith Johnson.

"I am so very lucky to have such phenomenal young friends and to live in an incredibly caring and supportive community like Lafayette," Chaney wrote, typed by toe on his iPad. "You are all an inspiration to me and to the many people with ALS and their families that you will never meet, but whose lives you will impact significantly." For more information about ALS, visit the ALS Association Golden West Chapter's website at www.alsagoldenwest.org.

For the past four years, the Lafayette Little League (LLL) has participated in the Runs 4 ALS program that directly benefits the ALS Association Golden West Chapter (ALSA-GWC), but this year three LLL players did something extra. The three Stanley Middle School seventh-graders, Tyler Ewing, Michael Bone and Matty Vicencio, all of whom turned 13 within one day of each other, decided to collect donations in lieu of gifts to benefit ALSA-GWC and to thank former LLL coach and board member Matt Chaney specifically. Matt Chaney was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), more commonly referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease, more than 12 years ago. But while Chaney describes it as "a wicked disease," he has continued his active participation in local kids' lives while dealing with the challenges he faces.

"ALS affects men and women of any age and any ethnicity. It is no fun having ALS," Chaney wrote in a thank you letter to the three teens. "Every day brings new challenges for simple everyday tasks. I keep hoping that someday soon there will be a breakthrough in research that will produce a treatment that will slow down or stop the progression. That hope is strengthened by the magnanimous gesture you have made today."

The three players wanted to thank Chaney for his years of volunteering with LLL and for his time at Buckeye Fields. They raised more than \$2,000 for ALS, while the LLL Runs 4 ALS program, led by board member, player agent and team manager Craig Bocks, netted \$5,852. Total LLL contributions to ALSA-GWC during the past four years reached just over \$16,000.

But the support from young athletes didn't stop there. At Burton Valley Elementary School, members of the fourth and fifth grades who participate in the school's "Noon League" program decided they wanted to do something special to honor Coach Chaney as well.

BVE Noon League students, families and the student council raised \$2,341 to support Chaney in his cycling team for the 8th Annual Napa Valley Ride to Defeat ALS. They surprised the coach at a special school assembly in June, and



From left, "Noon League" members Nick Broback, Justin Bocks, Cole Brightbill collect donations to support the Ride to Defeat ALS Photos provided

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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