

# MLB Winter Meetings

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Orlando, Florida, USA

**April Brown**

**Patrick Wilson**

**Cliff Floyd**

Charity Auction Press Conference

APRIL BROWN: Good morning. Welcome to Major League Baseball's Winter Meetings. My name is April Brown. I'm the Senior Vice President of Social Responsibility at Major League Baseball, and it is such a pleasure to welcome you to this year's announcement of our 12th annual Winter Meetings Charity Auction.

It's held every year at baseball industry's largest gathering. And this special annual auction was first started by many of you across our league at our MLB clubs from our PR teams and from our very near and dear friend Josh Rawitch.

It's our opportunity each year to support the causes that are close to our sport and to honor those in our game through the leadership and the work that is done off the field.

Through this initiative, Major League Baseball, together, has raised more than \$2 million to benefit causes and organizations very much aligned to our social responsibility pillars, to do things like support families of ALS patients, to support organizations like the Jackie Robinson Foundation and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. A scholarship fund was created one year in honor of the legacy of our great Katy Feeney, who was a trailblazer in our sport.

In past years we've been able to do incredible work, like to support a Boys & Girls Club in Uvalde, Texas, after the tragedy that they experienced. Of course, our nonprofit partners to Major League Baseball have benefited, such as Stand Up to Cancer and the work that they do to eradicate cancer and to support families.

We are again honored to be able to support something that is deeply connected to baseball. Year over year, we continue across this country, unfortunately, to see natural disasters take out many communities, including in the most recent year, just this time last year a little bit earlier in the summer, we had the hurricanes that came up the gulf, hit Florida and went through North Carolina. Those



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communities continue to recover.

Earlier this year, in January, we again had horrific fires in Southern L.A., and this summer we saw the devastating floods in Texas that took out many of our residents and, unfortunately, many youth.

When these disasters strike, it is our local communities and our local organizations that are key in the recovery process, especially when it comes to young people whose lives are dramatically turned upside down.

Our longtime partner, Little League International, has always been focused on growing the exposure of baseball and softball to our youth across the country in every community, and they have specially created this year a designated fund to help those Little Leagues that are affected by natural disasters.

The fields many times are the first place that families and youth look to when they're in that recovery process. It brings a sense of healing to the neighborhood to have that normalcy to come back to the field that you love to play the game on.

With that, I am so proud to announce that the recipient of this year's Winter Meetings Charity Auction will be the Little League Disaster Relief Fund.

(Applause.)

Helping to rebuild communities, rebuild the field and the complexes that our youth use is an important initiative, and I can't think of a greater cause for this year.

Let's take a look at a short video on how important this truly is to the community.

(Video.)

Thank you. Now to hear a little bit more about this important cause and Little League itself, please join me in welcoming the President and CEO of Little League International, Mr. Patrick Wilson.

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... when all is said, we're done.®

PATRICK WILSON: Thank you, April. Thank you to Major League Baseball for choosing Little League as the beneficiary of the disaster relief fund and the charity auction.

Little League is grateful that we enjoy a tremendous partnership with Major League Baseball, all the clubs, both at the Major League and Minor League level. Every year, as April mentioned, Little League programs around the world face impact from natural disasters. As communities begin the long road to recovery, we want to ensure that the fields that boys and girls play on, baseball and softball, are ready, and they have the equipment necessary when the kids are ready to return.

As April mentioned, I'll give you a great example, Wayne Johnson, board member from North Asheville Little League, shared with us that after Hurricane Helene, that the Little League field helped bring the community together and returned a sense of normalcy.

Actually, right after the storm, the entire community rallied at the Little League field to check on each other and learn more about how everyone was doing.

I think we have a little video from North Asheville.

(Video.)

It's truly amazing. Let me give you another example. To see kids playing again on a baseball and softball field after a disaster, I'll quote Troy Sanders from Indian Rocks Beach Little League here in Florida, who was also impacted by the storm Helene: "It warms your heart, and it allows you to feel good again when the kids return to the field."

As I close out my remarks today, I would be remiss if I didn't thank the Houston Astros for their support of the Ingram Little League in Texas after the devastating floods. The Astros are leading the efforts, along with other clubs in the community, in rebuilding the fields for the Ingram Little League.

Ingram President Mark Hensley shared that, in his opinion, our opinion, that the kids could really use a win right now, and that the redevelopment of their fields is that win they need. There are a lot of kids in Paris that are looking forward to getting out in the fields, and it's going to be a great thing for the community as they return to the fields in Ingram.

Thank you, Major League Baseball, for supporting Little League's Disaster Relief Fund. Local Little League

programs will benefit from the generosity for months and years to come. Little League is a trusted youth sports program, and we are fortunate that you believe in us to be the recipient of the grant.

In closing out, I'd like to thank all the people that will purchase items at the auction as well as all the organizations that donated -- Major League Baseball, minor league clubs, the Major League clubs, the Major League Baseball Network and the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Together, we can continue to provide access and opportunity for all children to enjoy the games of baseball and softball and be fans for life. Thank you.

(Applause.)

APRIL BROWN: Thank you, Patrick. And thank you to the Asheville Little League team for sharing that story.

Our next and final speaker is someone who's incredibly important to us and incredibly important to this initiative -- 1997 World Series champion and current MLB Network analyst, but most importantly, former Little Leaguer, Mr. Cliff Floyd.

(Applause.)

CLIFF FLOYD: Thanks, April. Thanks, Patrick.

Growing up in Chicago, Illinois, I was always excited to play for Markham Manor Little League. We all start somewhere. For every kid whose dream is to make it to the Big Leagues, their first memories of teamwork and heart were made on a Little League field. I'll go back and go off script and say that we didn't have any disaster, but we definitely could have used some relief fund, right? So this is a big day for Major League Baseball.

But when disaster strikes, whether it's a hurricane, a flood or a wildfire, it rips the heart out of every community. And worst of all, the sense of normalcy and hope for those kids is temporarily lost. That's why Major League Baseball, its clubs and players are immediately stepping up to support an organization and a cause that means a lot to me, the Little League Disaster Relief Fund.

You can bid now on exclusive memorabilia signed items from current and former legends, unique experiences and more. Every winning bid goes directly towards helping every community rebuild, buying new fences, replacing damaged equipment and restoring fields affected.

This isn't just about baseball. It's about giving kids their



normalcy back. It's about ensuring the next generation has its fields of dreams. So bid high, bid often, and help us get these kids back on the diamond.

I appreciate you, and thanks for coming out.

APRIL BROWN: I'm going to ask Cliff to stay, and I'm going to bring Patrick up. We have a little surprise for you.

PATRICK WILSON: We dug into the files. This is your Little League roster.

APRIL BROWN: It's Cliff's Little League roster from when he played in 1984. They went into the archives. They went into the basement, y'all.

CLIFF FLOYD: This is dope. This is awesome.

You know, I think the biggest thing for me -- I appreciate you guys -- our coach, Moses Harris; may he rest in peace -- we didn't have the means, but I think the biggest thing was he made a way for us, all of us kids.

I'm looking at these names on here, and he even put my name Cornelius Floyd instead of Cliff, and he knew I liked Cliff.

But you never know. It wasn't about getting to the Big Leagues, it was about trying to just go out there and get off the streets and play something that we loved to play every single day. And he made sure we did that.

I think that's what every kid is trying to get back to or trying to accomplish, just to play and have fun. Nobody knows about getting to the Big Leagues or understanding what it's going to take to get to the Big Leagues.

But, like I said, we all start somewhere. And to have someone like Mr. Harris, Coach Harris, get us off the streets. He had a big van. We used to pack in this van, and I know it was illegal, but we got there, you know what I mean? We got there.

This is pretty special. Thank you. Thank you, guys.

APRIL BROWN: Thank you, Cliff and Patrick.

I don't think anything else describes the heart and soul of Little League and getting our youth back on the field.

So we are ready. We are now up and running. We're going to go to [mlb.com/wintermeetingsauction](http://mlb.com/wintermeetingsauction). There are so many experiences on there. Again, thank you to all of our Major League clubs, our Minor League clubs, the commissioner's office, MLB Network, our Hall of Fame.

Experiences galore on there. Let me tell you a little bit about what's on there.

Want to meet Mike Trout? You can meet Mike Trout. Want to meet Corbin Carroll? You can meet Corbin. Want to have a VIP experience at your favorite ballpark? It's on there. Want to be in the broadcast booth, maybe be on the grounds crew? All of those experiences are on there. Legend items, everything that you can imagine.

Now this one, I know some of you definitely want to do. You want to join us next summer in Philadelphia for our All-Star. Tickets are on there. So you can bid on those. Every experience you can imagine, from our Minor League clubs across the country, from our Major League clubs. This one I think might be a hot item as well. You want to play catch with Francisco Lindor? It's on there.

So we all know it's holiday season. It's time to give the gift to others. But let's give a gift that also gives back to our youth across the country. So we're going to ask you again, please go to [mlb.com/wintermeetingsauction](http://mlb.com/wintermeetingsauction) and bid. What you're going to do is you're going to bid and then wait, and then you're going to go back and outbid the person who bid against you, and you're going to keep checking it.

It will close on Thursday evening, Thursday night at 10:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Make sure you get in there, get in there often, and basically support all of our Little Leaguers across the country by doing something good during this holiday season. So, thank you.

A big thank you to our colleagues, my colleagues in the room, our colleagues across PR and community who helped get these experiences and auction items together. Thank you to Little League for what you do each and every day throughout the communities of this country. Thank you, Cliff, for being with us and sharing your story.

This concludes our press conference. We are going to take a photo, and if anyone wants to speak to either Cliff or Patrick and ask additional questions, please feel free to come up after the photo.

Thank you, again, and happy Winter Meetings.

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