

Ripken group plays ball, gives to children's clubs

By JOHANNA D. WILSON
The Sun News

Children at the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club of Horry County will be in full swing this summer thanks to the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation.

The Baltimore-based nonprofit organization dedicated to providing baseball and softball programs that help inspire children

to reach for their dreams and be their best has awarded \$15,000 to launch programs at the four Horry County clubs in Myrtle Beach, Conway, Aynor and Loris.

"We didn't have a structured summer sport, and this grant money will give us that," said Pete Crawford, executive director of the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club. "We think this grant will allow us to highlight our

summer day camp program with an athletic sport, and it will be a draw for more youth to attend."

The softball leagues will begin in May and run for 10 weeks, Crawford said.

Representatives with the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation were in town Friday as a part of the second annual Play Ball Tour for

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Information

Want to give to the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club?

► Contact Sue Hamilton at 488-2769.

Want your kids to join a club? Call

► **Myrtle Beach** | 232-9604

► **Conway** | 488-1684

► **Aynor** | 358-1424

► **Loris** | 756-7279

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Kids. During the tour, children get to play Quick Ball, which is indoor baseball played with a foam ball. There are two teams of eight, and each child gets one swing at bat.

Myrtle Beach was the third stop on a 20-city tour to

provide grant money and baseball and softball equipment to children in the Southeast.

When the tour wraps March 8 in Dallas, the foundation will have given away more than \$735,000 in cash to Salvation Army Boys and Girls Clubs and donated more than \$1 million in school equipment in 45 East Coast cities, said Brandon Knott, the foundation's base-

ball operations manager.

The mission of the nonprofit — founded in 2001 by members of the Ripken family in honor of their patriarch and after Cal Ripken Jr., the baseball star dubbed the Ironman who played a record 2,632 consecutive games, retired — is to use baseball as a tool for character development to encourage leadership, team-

work, excellent sportsmanship and a healthy lifestyle among young people.

"We want to give these kids an opportunity to succeed, and baseball is not always at the forefront in some of these areas," Knott said.

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