

The Spirit of Baseball 2026



13th Annual Spirit of Baseball

*The Oak Avenue Complex
15 S. Oak Avenue, Highland Springs, VA*

Saturday, April 25th 2026

*Printing for the Spirit of Baseball Provided By
Richmond Printing Service*

804-355-4488

Gayton Baptist Church
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Henrico, Virginia 23233
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Website: gayton.church/spiritofbaseball

Baseball Clinic 2026

According to the Virginia Attorney General's Office, Street gangs recruit members as young as elementary school age. Street gangs may be composed of any gender, including boys and girls. (Note 1)

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 18.2 million children, nearly 1 in 4, live without a biological, step, or adoptive father in the home. That's enough children to fill New York City twice or Los Angeles four times over. (Note 2)

These are incredible facts, but, hardly surprising. We ought to be surprised. We ought to be astonished. We ought to be **OUTRAGED!**

Once children reach the age of ten, they begin to think about whom they are and what kind of people they want to be. Their needs are easy to see. Chet Emerson of the Boys and Girls Clubs puts it this way, "young people simply desire to be loved accepted and valued." When a void exists in the lives of children, they will turn to sex, crime, and gangs to gain acceptance. One does not need a sociology degree to know this—just ask a police officer, a teacher, a pastor, or a single mom.

One thing is sure: We must intervene at this critical time in their lives!

The Spirit of Baseball, Richmond, VA, Year Thirteen

In 2011, Gayton Baptist Church, along with dozens of other local organizations, established a free baseball camp in the Northside area of Richmond, VA. Over 70 children attended along with almost as many coaches and other volunteers. In 2012, almost 90 children participated. In 2013, over 130 children were there along with over 90 volunteers. The camp has been successful with varying levels of participation since its beginning.

Our target this year will be 80 children between the ages of 8 and 13.

The purpose of this day is to show boys and girls, who may be facing difficult circumstances, that someone does care about them—**that they are loved, they are accepted, and they are valued!** We want them to know that they can turn to **Jesus Christ** first, foremost and always.

From *10am to 4pm* we will be teaching nine fundamentals of the sport of baseball. These will include batting, bunting, pitching, catching, throwing, infield, outfield, base running, and sliding. Six stations will be manned by a Head Coach and several assistants. All coaches will have a working knowledge of baseball. This will be a first class operation and a complete skills training day.

Volunteers from Gayton Baptist Church, other area churches, and other organizations will be on hand for coaching, registration, lunch, counseling and a variety of other tasks. **We will provide for each participant a glove, hat, t-shirt, baseball and a Bible.**

How can you help?

This year the Spirit of Baseball will provide a season kick-off camp in support of River City Dreams as well as the Metropolitan Junior Baseball League. The MJBL is the oldest African-American little league baseball organization in the USA. Our camp will operate as always with attention to detail, baseball fundamentals, and kindness.

Your participation as a coach, team manager, lunch organizer, donor, or fundraiser is needed and essential.

You can sign up to volunteer for or donate to the camp by calling Larry Belcher 804-441-0351

To watch a video presentation of a previous “Spirit of Baseball” camp, go to www.gaytonchurch.org/baseball-camp or You Tube, search the “Spirit of Baseball” to view presentations of the camps from Richmond and Portsmouth, VA.

The Spirit of Baseball Partners:

- River City Dreams***
- Richmond Metropolitan Junior Baseball League***
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes***
- Richmond Police Outreach***
- Northside Outreach Center***
- Gayton Baptist Church***
- Tuckahoe Little League***
- Gamma Delta Psi-Gamma Psi Fraternity***

Note 1: The Commonwealth of Virginia Website, February 2024

Note 2: The National Fatherhood Initiative Website, January 15, 2026



Gamma Psi Fraternity members provide field instruction



Godwin High School Students Volunteer at a Spirit Mini-Camp

The Spirit of Baseball 2026

Saturday

- 8:00-9:00 AM Final camp setup (registration tables, power cables, speaker systems, grills, batting cages, pitching machines, Volunteer Check-in setup, more)
- 8:30 AM Bulk of Volunteers and Coaches arrive and finalize setup
- 9:30-10:00 AM Children arrive for registration and team assignments. Job overviews for Coaches and Team Managers.
- 10:00-10:25 AM Final kids arrive. Calisthenics, Opening Prayer, National Anthem, Final Instructions, Play Ball
- 10:30-11:00AM 1st skill set training
11:00-11:30AM 2nd skill set training
11:30-12:00 PM 3rd skill set training,
12:00-12:30 PM 4th skill set training (Nutsy Scheduled at 12:15)
- 12:30-1:30 PM Lunch Break, Speaker, Counseling available, bathroom breaks, group photo
- 1:30-2:00 PM 5th skill set training
2:00-2:30 PM 6th skill set training
(The above sessions could be shorter based on skill level of players and the weather)
- 2:30-4:30 PM **PLAY BALL!!**
Final Wrap up and hand out Bibles and Goody Bags
Children leave (This is flexible time)
- 5:00-5:30 PM Final camp clean up and leave area

Team Names and Age Assignments

- A. 9 Year Olds Teams - Braves (**Royal Blue** Shirts)
Pirates **8 and under** (**Gold** Shirts) will team up with the Braves as they go through the instruction
- B. 10 Year Olds Teams - Yankees (**Black** Shirts)
- C. 10/11 Year Olds Teams - Cardinals (**RED** Shirts)
- D. 11 Year Olds Teams - Rangers (**Navy Blue** Shirts)
- E. 12 Year Olds Teams - Oakland A's (**Green** Shirts)
- F. 13 Year Olds Teams - Giants (**Orange** Shirts)

Rotations:

9 year olds Braves and 8 year olds Pirates: Start at **Pitching Skills** and Follow the blue arrows on map

10 year olds Yankees: Start at **Outfield** and Follow the blue arrow on map

10/11 year olds Cardinals: Start at **Infield** and Follow the Blue arrows on map

11 year olds Rangers: Start at **Base Running and Sliding** and Follow the blue arrows on map

12 year olds A's: Start at **Batting** and Follow the blue arrows on map

13 year olds Giants: Start at **Bunting** and Follow the blue arrows on map

Rule number one: NO one adult can be alone with any one child. Always have two adults with a child on this park no matter where the child goes. **Rule number two:** No children go alone—children always travel in two.

Volunteer Opportunities:

We ask that you complete a confidential Background check as a requirement to volunteer to work with children at the Spirit of Baseball Camp. You can download the form from the Gayton Baptist Church website or pick up a copy at the church office. You may mail it in or drop it off at the office. Please turn in your completed form by one week before the camp date. Thanks for helping us to ensure the safest environment we can for these kids! If you have completed a form for volunteering at Gayton in the past year, you will not need to complete another check.

If you have any questions about the background check process, please contact Gayton Baptist Church at 804-360-2801.

Bus Assistants will ride the bus to pick up and return participants to and from stops around the Highland Park area. These assistants will greet the kids, check for signed permission forms, distribute or check wristbands to assure correct bus assignments, and chaperone the kids while on the bus. Our goal is to have two assistants to assist each bus driver. Once back at camp, Bus Attendants can suit up for another job on the field!

Coaching: We welcome coaches with various skill levels and will find a job for anyone who is interested in helping. Men, women, softball players or baseball players are welcome and needed. Pitching, throwing, catching, infield (all three bases), outfield, base running, sliding, batting, and bunting will be taught at skill stations in which every child will stop four in the morning, two after lunch). Coaches will be assigned to spend the day at a given station. All skill levels are welcome!

Canvassing Team: With all the planning, fundraising, and organization that has been done, the next big task is to get flyers in the hands of the kids we want to reach. With that in mind, we have set three canvassing dates in which we will hand out flyers in the Northside business district for a few hours as well as with the Police Athletic League, Boys & Girls Clubs and others.

Lunch: We will be serving hotdogs, chips, sports drinks, bottled waters and cookies for lunch. Volunteers are needed to grill, package, serve, set up and clean up the concessions stand. We currently have an experienced Grill Master (Mitch Billigsley) who will need plenty of help.

Registration Assistants are the first point of contact with our players and volunteers. It is important that these volunteers be organized, out-going and prepared to deal with a large number of people and potential issues. The registration center will serve as “command central” and will be the place to check permission forms, hand out gloves, hats and shirts, and assign players to their teams.

Team Managers will guide their assigned team through all six station rotations, lunch and the Gospel Message. These managers will help keep all of the players engaged and assist the Station Coaches whenever possible. Team Managers should be at least 16 years old and will be needed at camp all day. Each team will have approximately 4-6 managers depending on the number of players and volunteers.

Team Managers at the Spirit of Baseball will be unique among all of the volunteers at the camp. The Team Managers will have constant “face time” and “one on one” interaction with a specific group of participants. Interaction with inner city children is the reason we are putting on this event. Thus, no other position will have the same opportunity to fulfill the camp’s purpose and show Jesus’ love to the kids as will the Team Managers. This is truly special work!

Are you looking for a great way to help but don’t have the time to volunteer? If so, we have a list of supplies we need. Let us know and we can tell you what we need. **Every little bit helps!**