

Former T-Bird, now big leaguer, Adam Sonabend, hosts baseball camp for foster children

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Former Mesa Thunderbird and current San Francisco Giant minor league baseball player, Adam Sonabend, hosted a two-hour baseball camp recently for children ages 6-10 years old. (Aaron Webster/MCC)

Baseball is America's past time. But it's played all over the world by children of all ages. Most kids are taught baseball by coaches in little league, but very seldom does a child ever get the chance to be instructed by a major leaguer.

Former Mesa Thunderbird and current San Francisco Giant minor league baseball player, Adam Sonabend, with help from about 15 other major leaguers, made that dream a reality for 50 children who live in foster care around the Valley. Sonabend hosted a two-hour baseball camp for children ages 6-10 years old recently at Arcadia High School.

Also helping out Sonabend with coaching during the camp was current Mesa Thunderbird, [Kody Funderburk](#).

"I had a great time helping out," said Funderburk. "It was fun teaching baseball to kids who may have never played the game before."

The camp was broken up into age groups with four different stations: a hitting station, pitching station, infield station and outfield station. At each station, the major leaguers would give simple instructions and then the kids would show off their skills.

The idea to host a camp came to Sonabend one day while hanging out in his apartment.

"I realized I had a bunch of baseball gear that had been lying around for awhile but it was still in good shape," said Sonabend. "I thought that this stuff could easily be used again."

So Sonabend gathered his gear, asked some of his teammates for their old but usable gear and ended up gathering quite a bit of baseball equipment.

Now what to do with all this equipment? Luckily Adam's dad, Isy, had helped repair used bicycles for a program called, "Recycle your Bicycle," created by Joe Jacober. "Recycle your Bicycle" program takes used bikes, repairs them into good condition, then hands them out to underprivileged children during the Christmas season.

Sonabend made one phone call to Jacober about created a baseball camp for children who are in need or are in foster care and within one hour of creating the camp, all 50 spots for the camp had been filled.

Not only that, each kid who attended the camp received a brand new baseball glove and they were able to chose one item from the large selection of baseball equipment Sonabend had gathered from teammates.

"There are so many youth baseball leagues that this equipment could benefit," said Sonabend. "We just want to make sure that these kids have what they need to play the game that we love."

After the camp was over, all the kids were given a baseball so that all the major league players could sign. Even better, Pizza Hut donated pizza for all the campers to enjoy.

“Our first year doing this camp was last year and we had great success. This year went even better and we hope to make it better ever year,” said Sonabend.

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