



## **City of Toledo and the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation to Build Multi-Sport Youth Athletic Field in Old South End Neighborhood**

*The new synthetic turf field will provide local youth with a clean, safe place to learn, play and grow*

**Toledo, OH (December 10, 2018)** – The city of Toledo, together with the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, today announced plans to design and construct a new youth development park located in the Old South End neighborhood that will feature a 75,000-square-foot multisport synthetic turf field used for football, soccer, and baseball/softball and provide local youth with a safe outdoor place to play.

“Cal Ripken is one of the most iconic names in the history of baseball, so any program that has his name on it will be excellent,” Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz said. “We are committed to providing more and better recreational opportunities for Toledo, and being able to do that while also helping to revitalize one of our historic neighborhoods, is truly a grand slam.”

The Ripken Foundation facility at Danny Thomas Park will serve as the central location for the YMCA of Greater Toledo and The Believe Center programs. Local youth organizations will serve thousands of at-risk youth who are exposed to high-risk factors, such as above-average crime rates, families living below the poverty line, and a high number of children being raised in single-parent homes. Afterschool programming, such as organized team sports, is a powerful alternative during widely unsupervised time between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Research suggests 29 percent of all violent crime committed by juvenile offenders occurs during those hours.

“This is about much more than just building parks. It’s about building character,” said Steve Salem, President & CEO of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation. “The need is high for access to safe, positive facilities and programs like those provided by the YMCA of Greater Toledo and The Believe Center. We look forward to working together to help transform the community and change kids’ lives by giving them a safe, clean place to learn and grow.”

The catalyst for this project was a \$400,000 State of Ohio capital grant awarded to Historic South Initiative in 2017. The Ripken Foundation Youth Development Park will be located at the upper level of Danny Thomas Park, and the city of Toledo is making plans for the subsequent renovation of the lower level of Danny Thomas Park using the proceeds of the State capital grant.

### **About the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation**

For the last 17 years, the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation has worked tirelessly to implement youth development programs and create parks that directly address the problems facing at-risk youth in distressed communities across the country. Inspired by one of the most iconic baseball families, the Ripkens created the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation to honor the legacy of its family patriarch, longtime coach, and mentor, Cal Ripken, Sr. The Ripken Foundation uses sports-themed activities to bring police officers, youth partners and underserved kids ages 9 – 14 together on a level playing field to learn invaluable life skills.

The Ripken Foundation’s Youth Development Park Initiative creates clean, safe places for kids to play on multipurpose, synthetic surface fields that promote healthy living in an outdoor recreational facility. Since 2009,

the Ripken Foundation has more than 80 completed parks across the country in 22 states, impacting over 280,000 kids annually. In 2017, the Ripken Foundation impacted nearly 1.4 million kids nationwide through its Youth Development Park and mentor programs. For more information, visit [www.RipkenFoundation.org](http://www.RipkenFoundation.org). Follow @CalRipkenSrFdn on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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