

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 7, 2022

Hank Aaron Sports Academy commits \$5,000.00 gift to Grove Park Baseball

After a successful 2021 campaign in the Jackson-Metro area, statewide and regionally, benefitting youth ages 5 – 18, the Hank Aaron Sports Academy (“HASA”) announced today that it will be donating \$5,000.00 to benefit the 66 year old Grove Park Baseball Association, established in 1956 representing one of Jackson’s longest standing baseball programs for youth in the minority community. <http://www.grovesparkboysbaseball.com>

The funds will be used to assist in providing uniforms and equipment for the underserved youth while giving them a place to play at the HASA along with free youth camps, clinics, practices and a place to play baseball games. ***Jackson has the unfortunate designation of having 7 High Schools with not one of them having an on campus baseball field. Jackson also has the unfortunate designation of having the highest murder rate per capita than any other major city in the U.S. (2021), with many of the perpetrators and victims being youth ages 17 – 24.***

“We think there is a direct correlation between the prevalence of crime and the lack of sports and other activities for youth to get involved in. With the voluntary efforts of Holley Haywood and Clint Johnson; the former JPS Athletic Director, JSU Graduate and Boston Red Sox MiLB pitcher, we built a foundation for HASA in 2021 and now we go to work on the structure of these programs to benefit the local and regional underserved and often at risk youth.” – *Tim Bennett (CEO Hank Aaron Sports Academy / Co-Owner Biloxi Shuckers – Milwaukee Brewers MiLB AA)*

The HASA hosted over 400 baseball and related events in 2021 with the majority being rent free, including spring youth baseball tournaments, High School baseball games, Alcorn State University (HBCU), Mississippi Valley State University (HBCU), Tougaloo College (HBCU), Belhaven University, summer / fall league baseball and culminating with the Hank Aaron Big Show Championship where the winning teams were awarded the highly coveted and limited edition Air Griffey “Hank” baseball shoe in the form of a trophy.

The Hank Aaron Sports Academy was established for the purpose of keeping alive the legacy of Henry Aaron and his dedication to make the game of baseball available to all communities.