



LIVE UNITED



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Big names from sports, books, TV and business play in Saturday's All-Star Softball Classic for Youth at Safeco Field

United Way of King County and the Seattle Mariners want to raise \$1.4 million for youth dealing with homelessness and other threats to their future

SEATTLE, Washington (June 26, 2015) – Thousands will fill Safeco Field on **Saturday, June 27th** at an event that combines fun, sun, celebrities, and a great cause: Raising awareness and money for the more than 5,000 King County young people who, each year, lose a safe place to call home, and the many more whose future is at risk because they are disconnected from school and work. Stats show that **1 in 5 homeless youth is LGBTQ**, and **half are youth of color**.

Taking the field for a competitive, high-energy game of softball are legendary names from the Mariners, Seahawks, Sounders and Sonics along with celebrated figures from worlds of media, reality TV, food and literature. The day is co-produced by **United Way of King County** and the **Seattle Mariners** and is presented by Microsoft.

The player roster features Mariners Hall-of-Famers **Dan Wilson, Jay Buhner** and **John Olerud**; the world-champion Seattle Seahawks' **Jermaine Kearse**; Seattle Sounders alumni **Steve Zakuani, Taylor Graham**, and **Roger Levesque**; Seattle Sonics icon **Shawn Kemp**; and Seattle Storm co-founder **Karen Bryant**. Other players include best-selling author **Garth Stein** (*The Art of Racing in the Rain*), celebrity chef **Ethan Stowell** (Tavolàta and many more), singer Drew Chadwick (finalist on *The X Factor*), and three couples from ABC's *The Bachelor* or *Bachelorette* — **Catherine & Sean Lowe, Desiree & Chris Siegfried**, and **Molly & Jason Mesnick**.

Mariners catching legend **Dan Wilson** is a driving force along with his wife **Annie Wilson**. The Wilsons are long-time advocates for homeless children and youth, and so are energized by a growing community effort to do more for young people confronting homelessness and other issues in the way of making a strong start on adulthood.

"It's heartbreaking to meet young people who don't have a stable home," says Dan Wilson, "They struggle to stay in school, which is critical to their future. And they're vulnerable to people who want to exploit and hurt them. When I talk with these kids I see that they're just like my kids — smart, resourceful, hopeful for the future. They deserve the same chance to thrive — and this game is a way for our community to make that possible."

The **Seattle Mariners** are creating a special softball diamond on Safeco Field. There will be an intense five innings of play, and lots of goofball fun. Mariners announcer **Tom Hutylar** will call the game.

The day will be a celebration of resilience, as homeless youth tell their own stories, often including experiences in foster care or being GLBTQ and having to leave home because their family couldn't accept it.

The funds and awareness raised by the event will support homelessness prevention programs like Safe Place, which intervenes fast when kids first hit the streets, reuniting them with family if possible, finding them a safe refuge if not. Funds will also support shelter and housing, as well as programs that help kids finish school and land a job.

“The All-Star Celebrity Softball Classic is a powerful statement that we care about these kids, says **Jon Fine**, United Way's President and CEO. “And that we're going to do all we can to help them regroup and move on to a bright future.”

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What: All-Star Celebrity Softball Classic for Youth
When: Saturday, June 27
Time: 1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Time is approximate. Gates open at 1:30. Game starts at 3.)
Where: Safeco Field
Why: Roughly 800 youth struggle with homelessness each night in King County – 5,000 over the course of the year. They are at high risk of not finishing school and being victims of exploitation and crime. Every kid needs help growing up, and this game is a way for our community to be there for kids who otherwise wouldn't have the support. Together we can make sure they have a home, can finish their education, and can make a promising start on life as an adult.
More info: Visit uwkc.org/softball