

2021



SEASON IN REVIEW



ON THE FIELD

8TH STRAIGHT PLAYOFF TRIP

With the season on the line, the Worcester Bravehearts needed a win over the Nashua Silver Knights to advance to the FCBL playoffs. The fans in attendance were not disappointed as the Bravehearts pulled out a 10-1 victory, headlined by an inside-the-park grand slam by Nick Martin (left). The Bravehearts were able to hold off the Westfield Starfires in the standings by one game, clinching the final playoff spot.

A record 12 Worcester Bravehearts were selected to the 2021 FCBL All-Star Game, headlined by six players with Central Mass ties. Westborough-native Jack Choate (left) took home the Pitcher of the Night award, but it was Shrewsbury-Native Nick Martin who quite literally "stole the show" when he stole home in the seventh inning in front of a packed crowd in New Britain, CT.



BRAVEHEARTS IN THE BIGS

Two Worcester Bravehearts were selected in the 2021 MLB Draft. Four-year Braveheart Mariano Ricciardi was selected in the 18th Round by the Oakland Athletics and former FCBL MVP Ben Rice (above) was selected by the New York Yankees in the 12th round. Ricciardi currently holds the Bravehearts record for most hits and most games played, while Rice holds the Bravehearts single-season home run record.

HONORS ON AND OFF THE FIELD

Two Bravehearts took home league awards in the 2021 season. Pitcher Dennis Colleran (above) was awarded the FCBL Top Pro Prospect Award, while first baseman Andrew Selima was the team representative for the Adam Keenan Award. Colleran finished the season with a 1.11 ERA with 37 strikeouts in 24 innings. Selima was named the Adam Keenan Sportsmanship Award Winner because of his team leadership and work within the Worcester community.



FAMILY FUN

HOCKEY NIGHT

On July 30th, the Worcester Bravehearts held Hockey Night at the Ballpark. The Night included a t-shirt giveaway (above), a visit from the Worcester Railers, and Boston Bruins Forward Charlie Coyle (left) "shooting" the first pitch with a hockey stick! Charlie was even able to join-in on the promotional fun, throwing T-shirts, judging a Pie-eating contest, and helping a fan beat Jake the Lion in a base-race with a body check!



SOLD-OUT FINALE

During their last Friday home game of the season, the Bravehearts sold out Fitton Field with 3,487 fans in attendance. However, the highlight of the night came before the game. The team, along with Be the Match, were able to organize a pre-game ceremony where a bone marrow donor was able to meet the recipient of her bone marrow transplant for the first time (below). The meeting on the mound was facilitated by Villanova Football Head Coach Andy Talley (above), who has been instrumental in spreading awareness for those that need bone marrow transplants.



WE'RE ON TV!

On July 10th, the Bravehearts hosted a Saturday afternoon game against the Pittsfield Suns, which was broadcasted live on NESN. The team held a "sign-me-up" contest in which every fan who brought a sign to get shown on TV would receive a free hot dog, and the creator of the sign that was voted the best received a team-autographed baseball bat.



VACCINATION NATION

Throughout the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the Bravehearts worked diligently with health officials to ensure the safety of their fans, players and staff. In a push to incentivize fans to get the COVID-19 vaccine, the Bravehearts launched Vaccination Nation where fans would receive a free ticket to a Bravehearts game if they showed their vaccination card at the front gate. Worcester's Chief Pandemic Officer Dr. Michael Hirsch (right) also threw out the first pitch before the Bravehearts 2021 Home Opener.



FRIDAY NIGHT BRIGHTS

In a partnership with Be The Match, the Bravehearts debuted their neon green "Friday Night Bright" jerseys which they wore during every Friday home game. All jerseys were then auctioned off with proceeds going to the National Bone Marrow Registry. If the jerseys weren't bright enough, the Bravehearts also ended every Friday Night with a fireworks show!



Text BrothersForBryce to 61474 save a life.



IN THE COMMUNITY



DetecTogether

In the second jersey auction of the season, the Bravehearts partnered with DetecTogether, whose mission is to bring awareness of early cancer signs to young adults. On this night, the Bravehearts brought back former pitcher and recent cancer survivor Evan Moore (left) to throw out the first pitch. With the help of DetecTogether's resources he was able to detect his cancer at an early stage to ultimately beat the disease.

In a partnership with Open Sky, the Bravehearts players throughout the 2021 season became pen pals with adults served by Open Sky Community Services. After being pen pals for three months, the players were able to meet their pen pals at a pre-game cookout on August 11th where members of Open Sky and the team exchanged gifts and talked over hot dogs, burgers and chicken tenders!



SCOUT NIGHT

On June 25th, the Bravehearts hosted Scout Night at the ballpark, honoring boy and girl scouts from across the Central Massachusetts area. Bravehearts players held a pre-game baseball clinic for all members of the packs, followed by a pre-game parade which was highlighted by a high-five line with all of the players.

FAN-CREATED JERSEY

On June 27th, the Bravehearts held their first jersey auction of the season, with proceeds going to Autism Resource Central. The jersey the Bravehearts wore in this game against the Silver Knights, was a jersey created by Thomas Dona (right), father of Bravehearts pitcher Aaron Dona (above). Earlier in the season, Thomas' jersey design was selected as the winner of the Design-A-Jersey contest the team hosted. The neon-green jersey with often-associated autism puzzle pieces was the design Autism Resource Central representatives thought best promoted their mission.



BE Bravehearts HEALTHY!

During the 2020 off-season the Bravehearts, with the help of Worcester Fitness, created a program where kids from around the Worcester area could stay healthy and safe at the same time. Pitching coach Tyler Kelly (left) and many Bravehearts players released weekly videos, providing virtual gym classes during remote-learning sessions in place of what would have been a student's normal gym class.



ALL ABOUT JAKE...



AFTER SCHOOL RECESS!

In October of 2020 the Bravehearts hosted an after-school program at Recess II in West Boylston where young fans were able to play games with Bravehearts and Railers staff members and coaches. Activities included wiffle-ball with Jake the Lion, street hockey with the Worcester Railers and Trax, Giant Battleship, and even human foosball!

JR. BRAVEHEARTS

For the Seventh consecutive season, the Worcester Bravehearts offered the Jr. Bravehearts program to Little Leagues Around Massachusetts. In partnership with Northeast Promotion, the Bravehearts offered free hats and uniforms to a team in every participating league. League partners also received free Bravehearts Kid's Club memberships for all youth players, a Jake the Lion appearance at a Junior Bravehearts game, and a "Field of Dreams" experience at a Bravehearts game.



TICKET TO READ

In partnership with the Worcester Railers and Cornerstone Bank, the Bravehearts continued their Ticket-To-Read program. In this program, elementary-aged children can earn free Bravehearts and Railers tickets by reading ten books in a month.



JAKE OR TREAT

Although the Halloween of 2020 was a little different than most years, one thing remained the same. Jake The Lion (below) visited neighborhoods across the Central Mass area and joined fans on their trick-or-treating adventures. Whether it was because he wanted to join his community, or just stock up on some extra candy, Jake spent Halloween with some great fans from the area!



TESTIMONIALS

BRIAN MASON BRAVEHEARTS FAN

The kids (and adults) all had a blast at our son's birthday party. We felt really well taken care of - from the food, to the players hanging around, to minigolf, to chasing Jake (he has to get faster!) around the bases, to a mid-inning Q&A, to ice cream, to them bringing up extra baseballs and water. They really did a nice job. I would recommend a birthday to anyone who asks. Please let the entire staff know!

JAMES KING BRAVEHEARTS FAN

"My son just finished up your camp this past week, this was his first year attending. We wanted to thank you guys for such a wonderful experience. He had a blast. Your camp was by far one of the best camps we have ever been involved with. My son already told us he would like to do both weeks next year! Thank you guys again! You do such a great job in our community and city. Thank you for hosting the camp and allowing our son to fall in love with baseball."

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT SARA PORT

DetecTogether

"We just published our news item about the DetecTogether Night at the Bravehearts and continue to be incredibly grateful for this wonderful opportunity. We had such a great time getting to know the players, the team of hard-working folks at the Bravehearts and your awesome fans. It was an honor, and we appreciate your friendship and support.

Hope to see you all again soon!"

MICHAEL CHAVES JR. BRAVEHEARTS CATCHER '21

Just wanted to reach out and thank you for everything. Was a honor to play for you guys and I had a blast! You guys do everything the right way and make baseball fun! Appreciate everything!

Please pass on my thanks to your staff and the rest of the people who make the Bravehearts happen!

Good luck the rest of the way! Roll hearts!



