

Hello.

My name is Brian Burse. I live in Alliance, Ohio, and I love the game of baseball. My wife, Lori, and I moved to Alliance in 2001 to raise our family and we have four sons. They have all played or are playing baseball. As a child, I grew up in nearby Louisville and played baseball. I had the pleasure of being a part of some great teams with my schoolmates and neighbors and have many fond memories of hearing my parents cheer for us from foul territory. When Lori and I recognized that our first-born son was old enough to play baseball, we'd missed the sign-ups for his first eligible year of T-ball, but the following year he started what has become our family's career in youth sports. 13 years later, Lori and I find ourselves volunteering to coach, manage, fund-raise, advertise, run sign ups, and help in any way that we can as a part of a wonderful organization, Hot Stove Baseball.

Allow me to provide you with some background. The Hot Stove League was first conceived in 1935 by Karl Artman in Selma, Alabama, and became a national organization with 50 Charters having been formed by 1940. In November of 1937, Alliance was the first city in Ohio to receive a Charter. In 1942, Cy Butler purchased the franchise and the National Hot Stove League Headquarters was moved to Alliance with Mr. Butler becoming the National President. Under his leadership, the organization continued to grow, reaching over 100,000 members. In 1967, after Cy Butler's passing in 1965, a group of men pooled their efforts and incorporated Ohio Hot Stove Baseball League, Inc. The national program could not be revitalized, but OHSBL carries on today. With 9 Charters and nearly 300 teams, Ohio Hot Stove is committed to serving the youth, boys and girls alike, of our communities by providing them the opportunity to learn and play baseball and softball in all its phases in a safe and positive manner.

Prior to my voluntary involvement, I had no idea that Alliance Hot Stove Baseball League had such a rich history. I wasn't aware of the countless hours put forth by volunteers, coaches, parents, league officials, board members, and trustees to make it all happen year after year. Alliance has been the home to decades of district, regional, and state tournaments, bringing spectators and officials from all over the state of Ohio to town to support our local businesses and to give our community the limelight, showcasing our beautiful fields and parks along with the wonderful hospitality of the residents of Alliance and its surrounding area. We are very blessed to have the support of our city, its officials, our parks and recreation department and other volunteer organizations like the Friends of the Parks that work hard to preserve and support our ability to offer a quality, affordable, baseball program to the youth of Alliance and surrounding communities.

Over the years, we have worked diligently to continue to provide opportunities for the children of our communities to play baseball. What I've learned over those years is much more profound than any win/loss record or individual player's accomplishments. I've learned that baseball teaches young people how to live. Baseball is not just a metaphor for life, but a chance to grow as a person through teamwork, through trial and error, through personal sacrifice and perseverance, through love of one another and through respect for the people around us and for those who have come before us. Being part of a team teaches us the power of belonging to a community. Baseball teaches us to test our limits and reach for the stars, to push ourselves and pick each other up, to recognize when we've been beaten and to win or lose with integrity.

My family has been involved in Alliance Hot Stove Baseball for more than a dozen years. I recognize that this pales in comparison to the service and dedication given to this fine organization

by others who we serve with and who have served before us, but we stay for these reasons: baseball must be available to any child who chooses to play; baseball must be available to those who can afford it and to those who cannot; baseball must be available to our community as a source of continued history, as we watch our children make it every single time they step onto a field; baseball must be treated like a gift to be cherished and savored; baseball brings people joy.

I write this letter today not as a sentimental diatribe but as an invitation. I invite all of you who read this to consider joining Hot Stove Baseball. I invite you to consider volunteering your time, talent, and treasure to the betterment of our youth and the procurement of a solid future for them. Most importantly, I invite you to support our children - your sons and daughters, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and neighbors - to come out and play ball! As we approach our upcoming season in 2021, Alliance Hot Stove Baseball League is reaching out to any and all neighboring community charters, organizations, teams, and players to invite them to become a part of the rich history that is created when our youth play baseball. We are opening our doors to anyone who shares our dream to bring our communities together for the sake of our youth and the game of baseball. Please take a moment to consider the possibility of bringing your player, your team, or your organization to play with us. We recognize the need to evolve to meet the needs of our ever-changing landscape. We are committed to working toward a common goal of creating a quality experience for players at all levels. We recognize the need to be flexible regarding evolving technology and the permeating desire for families to be able to spend valuable time together. We would love to have the opportunity to welcome you into the Hot Stove family.

If you, or anyone you know would like to learn more about Hot Stove Baseball or about how you could help us to improve upon the experiences of our players and coaches by sharing your positive and negative experiences and suggestions for improvement, or if you would like to play Hot Stove baseball through Alliance Hot Stove or one of our neighboring charters, please follow this link to fill out a very brief survey. Our players will likely meet some day, in high school or before, as we are already neighbors and share common goals in preparing them for a future that includes baseball. Please take a few moments to let us know what it would take to bring you to choose Hot Stove Baseball for the coming spring/summer season. Teams can play in more than one league and be eligible for opportunities outside of a Hot Stove schedule, as well.

[2021 Alliance Hot Stove Baseball League Survey](#)

There is no question that 2020 and COVID-19 have provided us with many challenges, and we stand by the decisions we made as a board of volunteers to keep our players, coaches, fans, and officials safe and healthy. Soon, with application of safe practices and guidelines, we will be advertising our annual sign-ups and looking to plan for a 2021 season to beat all. Please visit our websites - www.alliancehotstove.org or www.ohsbl.com - or visit us on Facebook (Alliance Hot Stove Baseball League) to learn more about us. We can be reached via email at alliancehotstove@gmail.com. You can also send texts to us or call us to leave a voicemail at 330-539-BALL (2255).

I'd like to close by thanking you for your time and attention and by thanking everyone who has come before me and everyone who has ever supported youth baseball. I hope to hear from you and hope to do my best by you and our community to serve our youth through baseball. I'll leave you with one of the greatest movie quotes of all time:

“They'll walk out to the bleachers and sit in shirt-sleeves on a perfect afternoon. They'll find they have reserved seats somewhere along one of the baselines, where they sat when they were children and cheered their heroes. And they'll watch the game, and it'll be as if they'd dipped themselves in magic waters. The memories will be so thick, they'll have to brush them away from their faces.

The one constant through all the years . . . has been baseball.

America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It's been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt, and erased again. But baseball has marked the time.

This field, this game -- it's a part of our past . . . It reminds us of all that once was good, and it could be again.

Oh, people will come . . . People will most definitely come.”

Sincerely,

Brian R. Burse
President
Alliance Hot Stove Baseball League