

Meijer has supported the [West Michigan Miracle League](#) since its inception when we helped fund construction of an accessible softball field in Rockford, Mich. Our support hit a new level when we recently revealed our new sponsorship of the complex where the field is located, now named the [Meijer Sports Complex](#).

“Meijer was one of the most generous supporters up front,” said Tony Comden, President of the West Michigan Miracle League. “Thanks in part to their generosity, we were able to build the Nate Hurwitz Field in 2013, and now we’ve come full circle seeing their name on the whole complex.”

A lifelong baseball fan, Tony was inspired to start the league by his son, Jed, who was diagnosed with brain cancer at the age of 2. Because of the cancer and resulting surgeries, Jed lost some of his gross and fine motor skills. He had to relearn to walk and talk and still has some limitations that slow him down today. Having played baseball growing up, Tony wanted that experience for Jed, and when he realized most baseball leagues in the area weren’t feasible for his son, Tony set out to find a solution for children with disabilities in the area and the West Michigan Miracle League was born.

“The Meijer name means a lot in West Michigan,” Tony said. “They’re known for supporting our community where their employees and customers live. I’m proud to be associated with the Meijer name.”

A decade later, West Michigan children with disabilities continue to benefit from the Miracle League. One such child is Gibson Prater, 12, who has Mowat-Wilson’s Syndrome and Autism, resulting in some developmental delays that make certain organized sports difficult. When he plays in the Miracle League, Gibson is escorted base-to-base by a volunteer buddy who helps him and cheers him on.

“At the Miracle League, the buddies take their time with the players and are patient, cheerful, respectful and supportive no matter the developmental stage,” said Carrie Prater, Gibson’s mother.

Carrie is also an Administrative Assistant in our corporate office and leads the Meijer Disability Awareness and Advocacy Group (mDAAG), a resource group for Meijer team members who identify as part of the disability community and their allies. Through mDAAG, Carrie has arranged for Meijer team members to volunteer as buddies in the league.

“I am glad the disability community continues to be supported by Meijer,” Carrie said. “Disability isn’t often part of the national conversation when we talk about marginalized communities, but it’s an important part of the conversation. These kids deserve the opportunity to live their dreams and for the families to feel supported.”

We’re happy to support our community, customers and team members through our partnership with the West Michigan Miracle League and proud to see our team members supporting it as well.

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Additional assets available online: [\(1\)](#)

<https://meijercommunity.com/West-Michigan-Miracle-League-Partnership-Comes-Full-Circle>