

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Jack Hooper Day at the Ballpark & Homerun Derby a Hit**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Jack Hooper Day at the Ballpark and Homerun Derby which was held on May 14, 2016 reminded all in attendance about the importance of HOPE. To hope is to wish for with a feeling of confident expectation. When Turtle Wing Foundation board members and friends blew out the candles on Jack's birthday cake, the wish was definitely for the mission of the foundation to continue to touch the hearts and lives of children and families. Opening ceremonies focused on celebrating Jack's fifteenth birthday and the legacy of hope he has left for everyone. Turtle Wing was founded in Jack Hooper's honor and memory in 2011 after he passed away suddenly from a virus of unknown origin.

As part of the opening ceremonies, the Turtle Tweens assisted board members in telling a story of hope - Hope for overcoming obstacles, Hope for acceptance and understanding, Hope for growing the mission of Turtle Wing Foundation, and Hope for continuing to make lives

better. Turtle Tweens is one of the newer foundation programs, which incorporates Applied Behavioral Analysis(ABA) Therapy into monthly outings that help participants develop social skills, friendships, and life skills that will all help them reach for success. Ty Janak, Weimar ISD high school student, sang the national anthem and Mike Olle, who served as master of ceremonies for the day, kicked it all off announcing, "Play ball!"

Runners gathered bright and early to participate in the annual 5k fun run, with 225 men, women and children registering. The top runners were Grant Kubala for youth, Chip Bubela for men and Kim Bubela for women. Following opening ceremonies, participants had high hopes for homeruns. Hitters of all ages from a t-ball bracket to 50+ competed for bragging rights and the title of homerun champion. Winners include:

Boys	6 & under	Boston Targac
Boys	7-8	Connor Lichnovsky
Boys	9-10	Titan Targac
Boys	11-12	Jagger Fishbeck
Boys	13-14	Brett Janecek
Boys	15-16	Hunter Schulz
Boys	17-18	Caleb Valchar
Men	19-23	Scott Stoner
Men	30-34	Josh Morgan
Men	35-39	Adam Bosl
Men	40-49	Craig Schulz & Brian Hamilton
Men	50+	Mike Olle
Girls	6 & under	Brooklyn Barber
Girls	7-8	Cora Brenek

Girls	9-10	Kieryn Adams
Girls	11-12	Annie Charanza
Girls	13-14	Abbey Wellborn
Girls	15-16	Kyndal Kutac
Girls	17-18	Jenson Picou
Women	19-23	Allison Meyer
Women	30-34	Lindsey Schiffli
Women	35-39	Nancy Brenek
Women	40-49	Susie Shank
Women	50+	Helen Galipp

Along with the Derby, supporters gathered for a silent auction, great music and food. The souvenir booth highlighted birthday derby shirts along with t-shirts, wrist bands, notepads and a variety of Turtle Wing gear.

The Kid Zone was busier than ever, with the Schulenburg/Weimar Area Parents as Teachers ([www.sw-pat.org](http://www.sw-pat.org)) joining in on the fun, helping celebrate the day as one of their Group Connections. Beyond Therapy set up an obstacle course for kids of all ages to compete in a timed challenge. Winners there included: 4 & under - Brady Segura, 5/6 - Josh Vrana, 7 to 9 - Dereon Johnson, 10 to 15 - Braidy Fike, and 16+ - Erica Steinhauser. There was face painting, balloon animals created by Dr. David Zatopek, and a nail painting station skillfully manned by the Schulenburg ISD cheerleaders. Children in attendance also enjoyed bubbles and hula hoops, bounce houses, a craft station and train ride. The Mini Horse Helpers ([www.minihorsehelpers.org](http://www.minihorsehelpers.org)) entertained as well with one of their therapy horses, Prissy, visiting with the children in the Kid Zone. The Turtle races were a huge hit with the crowd cheering on their favorite racer. There were teams from each class and work group from St. Rose of Lima. Turtle were named and signs of support crafted by the students. In the end, the turtle sponsored by the St. Rose Lunch Ladies won. For individual heats, Grant Kubala sponsored the ultimate champion.

The commitment and support of volunteers who gave of their time and talents, along with community support, sponsors, and the City of Schulenburg all added up to make this event a huge success. Now that success can be directly translated into the lives of families that will benefit from the foundation's work. Turtle Wing has been founded to help families, not only families affected by Autism, but all families who struggle with learning differences. The recipients have all been from Colorado, Fayette, Lavaca and surrounding counties with academic, social-emotional, behavioral and/or developmental needs. Turtle Wing's three programming areas are Early Intervention, Supplemental Services, and Community Education & Advocacy. Learn more about Jack and the mission of Turtle Wing by viewing "Jack's Story" at the following link: <http://vimeo.com/35124978> or visiting the website [www.turtlewingfoundation.org](http://www.turtlewingfoundation.org).

5K Winners: (L-R) Chip Bubela/men; Kim Bubela/women; Grant Kubala/youth

HRD Winners Boys: (L-R) Boston Targac, 6 & under; Connor Lichnovsky, 7-8; Titan Targac 9-10; Jagger Fishbeck, 11-12

HRD Winners Men: (L-R) Mike Olle, 50+; Brian Hamilton & Craig Schulz, 40-49; Adam Bosl, 35-39; Caleb Valchar, 17-18; Hunter Schulz, 15-16

HRD Winners Girls & Women: (L-R) Front Row: Helen Galipp, 50+; Allison Meyer, 19-23; Annie Charanza, 11-12; Cora Brenek, 7-8; Kiern Adams, 9-10; Back Row: Susie Shank, 40-49; Nancy Brenek, 35-39; Lindsey Schiffli, 30-34; Kyndal Kutac, 15-16; Jenson Picou, 17-18; Abbey Wellborn, 13-14

Turtle Wing 2016 2013: (L-R) Mary Wellborn, Emma Kubala, Jessica Shank, Elizabeth Shank, Marshall Wellborn helped to spell out the word HOPE

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