

## president`s address for the 2019 opening ceremony

Good morning dear friends,  
dear parents and above all  
dear girls and boys!

A warm welcome on this cold morning here at our field at Sachtlebenstraße!

It`s a pleasure and an honor for me as president of the ALLBB baseball division of the JFK-Sportsclub **to welcome you to the 2019 American Little League Baseball Berlin** season!

This is the 14<sup>th</sup> season since our Little League chapter has started to offer and play baseball as a community and family event some 13 years ago, in 2006.

**Every spring we have come together here to play baseball and watch our kids play baseball...**

- to see hits and runs,
  - to celebrate great defensive plays,
  - to cheer for the teams,
  - to share team snacks with our comrades and friends,
  - to enjoy a burger or a hot dog from the grill,
  - to goof around with other kids,
  - to enjoy being outside
  - in short: to be a kid
- and for us parents: to watch our kids doing all of these things!

But dear parents:

... we don't want to forget that the mission of Little League Baseball is also something more. Let me quote from the bylaws:

“Through proper guidance and exemplary leadership, [we] assists children in developing the qualities of citizenship, discipline, teamwork and physical well-being. By espousing the virtues of character, courage and loyalty, **the Little League Baseball and Softball program is designed to develop superior citizens rather than superior athletes.**”

I know that we parents and coaches have a two-goal approach: first, seeing our kids and their teams win; and, secondly, and more importantly, teaching these kids, our kids, life lessons through **baseball**.

**Let us aim for this second goal.**

We - as the ALLBB - adopted this classically Little League mission here in Berlin by setting one additional goal:

We see our league as an essential part of the **German-American community** here in Berlin.

The **German-American friendship** has a hometown: Berlin. And, more specific Berlin-Zehlendorf, where for half a century American troops and German citizens lived together side by side, supported each other in their daily lives and shared the value of freedom.

We **celebrate this bit of history** each year by presenting the colors and the anthems of our two nations during our opening ceremony.

*Therefore a special thanks to the girls and boy scouts for being such a formidable color guard and the Bees Knees for performance of the anthems.*

This year we welcome nearly 200 kids and their families from about 10 nations. Americans, Germans, Canadians, families from France, the Netherlands and Japan as well as China, Spain and the United Kingdom.

As citizens of the world: let us celebrate this league as a place where families who made Berlin their home come together, united by friendship, freedom and, of course, the game of baseball.

**Before we start the ballgames: let me introduce and say thank you to a few people. Without these amazing women and men all this would not be possible:**

First of all I want to say thank you to my fellow board members, who spent so many time and evenings organizing this league:

- Thank you to our **Vice President Max**
- Thank you to our **Treasurer Anna**
- Thank you to our **Registrar Buck**
- Thank you to **Coaches-and Players-Coordinator Cameron** who has had one of the toughest job you can imagine over the past few weeks! I bow to you!
- Many thanks to **Umpire Coordinator Jackie**
- Thanks to **Volunteer-Parents-Coordinator Shannon**, who is also the queen of the concession stand empire and the grill!
- Thank you **Gregg, our Equipment Manager**. Your engagement and dedication for this club and this sport is truly amazing!
- Thank you **Stefi, our Secretary**.
- A special thanks to **Iris, who stepped in as our Communications Manager**, redesigned our website and has worked hard to keep it up to date! Iris, I doubt you appreciate how thankful we are for having you in our team!

- And last but certainly not least, a very warm and heartfelt thank you to Tom. **Tom is our Field Manager** and is always the first to enter the field in the morning and the last to leave it at night! Your help is beyond words.

Thank you to all the parents and all the kids who step in and support the ALLBB as volunteers!

Thank you to all the coaches and umpires! To all the team moms! To everyone who helps to make this season possible!

Enough words from my side... It's time to start the season!

**Now, let me introduce to you our honorary guest, Deputy Cultural Affairs Officer Scott Robinson of the US embassy.**

We are thrilled that he accepted our invitation to have him throw the first pitch, with his son Jack catching.

At the US embassy, Scott works on exchange programs but he is also a long-time member of the baseball advisory group, which looks for ways to use baseball in US public diplomacy programs.

Both his two sons, Ashton and Jack, have played in this league for many years.

I can't imagine a better representative of US cultural diplomacy nor of the German-American friendship to throw the First Pitch!

**Scott, the field is yours!**

*Florian Schlehofer*

*President of the American Little League Baseball Berlin (ALLBB)*