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Disability Awareness Night recognizes importance of DFW children and adults with disabilities

*Fort Worth Cats put special needs families center stage at LaGrave Field*

Fort Worth, TX June 10, 2009 – LaGrave Field was the place to see and be seen Saturday May 30 as 4,500 fans watched the Fort Worth Cats take on the Wichita Wingnuts and participated in Disability Awareness Night 2009.

Sponsored by Stevens Financial Group in collaboration with *Exceptional Parent* magazine, the second annual Disability Awareness Night included nine organizations throughout the Metroplex dedicated to serving people with special needs, of which 279 members came together to show thousands the importance of recognizing and supporting those with disabilities. Attendees watched as Richard W. Stevens, General Agent of Stevens Financial Group and Riley Miller, Military Editor for *Exceptional Parent* magazine awarded the *EP Maxwell J. Schleifer Distinguished Service Award* to two recipients. Laurie Bunger, who accepted the award for Laura Butler, president of ARC of Northeast Tarrant County, and Kent Waldrep of the Lone Star Paralysis Foundation were awarded for their contributions to improving the lives of adults and children with special needs.

But the true spirit of the evening was felt when 8-year-old Ethan Hollier and 8-year-old Tyler Tooley, both members of the ULL Challenger Little League, took the field to make the first pitch of the game, which the Cats went on to win 5-2 over the Wichita Wingnuts.

“The children were ecstatic to throw the first pitch of the game; It was very special for them to be a big part of something so important,” said Richard W. Stevens, General Agent for Stevens Financial Group, a general agency of Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual). “Their families were nearly moved to tears, and that’s what Disability Awareness Night is about; we want them to know they are an important part of our community and they are not alone.”

MassMutual and its agencies are sponsoring these ball park events, called Disability Awareness Nights (DAN), across the country this spring and summer.

“DAN events are important because parents who have children with special needs are not only struggling to manage their finances and care for their children,” said Richard W. Stevens.
"They’re trying to give their children typical life experiences, like making friends or simply enjoying a day at the ballpark."

People with disabilities are a special focus for MassMutual and its Special Care Planners across the country. The Special Care Planner receives advanced training and information in estate and tax planning concepts, special needs trusts, government programs and the emotional dynamics of working with people with special needs and their families. The certificate program is offered by The American College in Bryn Mawr, PA exclusively for MassMutual financial professionals.

“We’re advocates for people with disabilities and other special needs,” said John Chandler, MassMutual senior vice president. “There is no reason why they should live in fear or isolation; helping them improve their quality of life is a top priority for MassMutual.”

For more information on MassMutual’s SpecialCare℠ program, contact the SpecialCare℠ Planning Team at Stevens Financial Group at 817-332-4451, or visit www.massmutual.com/specialcare.

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About MassMutual

MassMutual Financial Group is a marketing name for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual) and its affiliated companies and sales representatives. MassMutual and its subsidiaries had more than $360 billion in assets under management at year-end 2008. Assets under management include assets and certain external investment funds managed by MassMutual's subsidiaries.

Founded in 1851, MassMutual is a leading mutual life insurance company that is run for the benefit of its members and participating policyholders. MassMutual is headquartered in Springfield, Massachusetts and its major affiliates include: Babson Capital Management LLC; Baring Asset Management Limited; Cornerstone Real Estate Advisers LLC; The First Mercantile Trust Company; MassMutual International LLC; MML Investors Services, Inc., member FINRA and SIPC (www.finra.org and www.sipc.org); OppenheimerFunds, Inc.; and The MassMutual Trust Company, FSB. For more information, visit massmutual.com.