

Teams come together for tournament to honour slain officer



By Jake Courtepatte

Const. Garrett Styles loved to play baseball. He was a seasoned pitcher playing with the Newmarket Baseball Association for many years.

But in the early hours of June 28, 2011, Styles was killed in the line of duty following a routine traffic stop in East Gwillimbury.

Only two months later, Styles' York Region home came together to inaugurate the Garrett Styles Memorial Baseball Tournament – a tradition that continues today with thousands of dollars raised by friends, family, and even complete strangers travelling from all over Canada and the United States.

“It makes me feel really proud, really happy,” said retired Constable Garry Styles, Garrett’s father. “I look forward to it every year and that they come here and support my family, my community.”

This year’s incarnation of the tournament came last week over the areas of Aurora and Newmarket, with two schedules hitting four different fields.

In the high school tournament, the powerhouse St. Andrew’s College (SAC) Saints defeated Our Lady of the Lake 8 – 5 to capture the championship, earning back-to-back victories earlier in the day against Crescent School and King City Secondary to advance to the finals. Both victories were blow-outs, with scores of 12 – 0 and 11 – 1. The final was won at McKnight Field in Newmarket, with round robin action played at SAC.

King City went 1 – 1 in round robin play, beating Crescent School in their final game of the day.

“I think a tournament like this means a little more than usual,” said King City’s Brad Thompson. “To hear about the history of it and know that there’s meaning behind it, it’s more than just baseball.”

The senior tournament was also underway with a battle between emergency service departments from as far away as the United States. It was an American team that took the crown, with the New York Courts team beating the Toronto Police Service in the final.

“A day like this is much more than just baseball,” said Toronto Police Constable Ryan Gourds. “When you hear the story of Garrett, and his young family – it just makes you want to do something about it. It’s a good way to remember.”

Proceeds from the tournament go to Canadian Tire’s JumpStart program, helping children in York Region whose parents have trouble affording organized sports.