



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL LAUNCHES NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR "WELCOME BACK VETERANS," IN SUPPORT OF RETURNING AMERICAN VETERANS, OVER JULY 4th WEEKEND

MLB teams to wear "Stars & Stripes" caps; Welcome Back Veterans.org logo to adorn ceremonial home plate and bases; Auction of caps, bases and more to benefit WBV

Major League Baseball today announced a series of national fundraising and awareness initiatives over the July 4th weekend and on September 11th for Welcome Back Veterans, which addresses the mental health and job needs of returning American Veterans.

Welcome Back Veterans was created by New York Mets Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Fred Wilpon and a group of private citizens. Supported by Major League Baseball, Major League Baseball Advanced Media and the McCormick Foundation, the goal of Welcome Back Veterans is to raise \$100 million and provide 100,000 job opportunities for Veterans. All creative materials for the charitable organization, including television, radio and online creative, were produced pro bono by McCann Erickson North America in conjunction with the Ad Council. This includes a series of public service advertisements featuring Academy Award-winning actor Tom Hanks and directed by Bennett Miller, nominated for an Oscar for his direction of *Capote*.

The announcement was made this afternoon at a press conference at Major League Baseball Offices in Manhattan. The event featured **Fred Wilpon**; **General David L. Grange**, retired United States Army Brigadier General and President and CEO of the McCormick Foundation and third baseman **David Wright** of the New York Mets.

For games throughout the July 4 weekend and on September 11th, all Major League Baseball teams will wear "Stars & Stripes" caps that are available for sale to the public with a portion of the proceeds going to Welcome Back Veterans. These official New Era caps can be purchased beginning today at www.shop.mlb.com.

All home teams over the July 4th weekend will host ceremonies honoring Veterans in their community. For games on July 4th, "Welcome Back Veterans" will adorn the bases and ceremonial home plates. There will be custom lineup cards, with a place for a local veteran to

place his or her signature. Among many fundraising activities, MLB.com will auction off a set of bases, game-worn caps and a specially-designed team jersey to benefit the Welcome Back Veterans Fund.

"Major League Baseball considers it both an obligation and a privilege to assist our troops in any way we can," said DuPuy, a veteran who served a year in Vietnam and received the Army Commendation Medal for his service. "Welcome Back Veterans was created to help our brave men and women make a successful transition to civilian life when their service to their country has ended. We ask that all Major League Baseball fans join us on July 4th weekend and on September 11th in this grand-scale effort to raise funds and bring awareness to this vital cause."

"I congratulate Major League Baseball on this extraordinary act of compassion for our veterans throughout our Independence Day weekend," said General Grange. "With Welcome Back Veterans, Major League Baseball is providing financial support and, just as importantly, shining a light on the challenges facing our returning men and women of the armed forces."

Welcome Back Veterans has teamed with the University Hospitals of Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York, the University of Michigan and Stanford University, which are developing treatment procedures for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental health issues of returning Veterans and their families. In addition, Welcome Back Veterans is working closely with corporate America to provide 100,000 job opportunities for returning Veterans.

"This is a cause that transcends everything, so I encourage all baseball fans to join us over July 4th weekend and on September 11th in supporting Welcome Back Veterans," said David Wright, the Mets' third baseman. "When it comes to supporting our veterans, everyone in Major League Baseball is on the same team." For additional information on Welcome Back Veterans, please go to www.welcomebackveterans.org.

About Major League Baseball Charities

Major League Baseball Charities is a not-for-profit corporation that provides support to local, national and international tax- exempt organizations to directly conduct or sponsor activities for the promotion of good health, physical education, public safety, medical research, literacy, educational or charitable purposes. In addition to supporting Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), the Official Charity of Major League Baseball, MLB Charities provides support to a number of other national charitable initiatives, including Little League Baseball, the National Urban League and the Jackie Robinson Foundation. The Office of the Commissioner of Baseball pays all administrative expenses for MLB Charities.

About The Advertising Council

The Ad Council (www.adcouncil.org) is a private, non-profit organization that marshals talent from the advertising and communications industries, the facilities of the media, and the resources of the business and non-profit communities to produce, distribute and promote public

service campaigns on behalf of non-profit organizations and government agencies in issue areas such as improving the quality of life for children, preventive health, education, community well-being, environmental preservation and strengthening families.

About the McCormick Foundation

The McCormick Foundation is a nonprofit organization committed to strengthening our free, democratic society by investing in children, communities and country. Through its five grant-making programs, Cantigny Park and Golf, and three world-class museums, the Foundation helps build a more active and engaged citizenry. The Foundation was established as a charitable trust in 1955, upon the death of Colonel Robert R. McCormick, the longtime editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune. The Foundation is one of the nation's largest charities, with \$1.2 billion in assets.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES

From Peggy Conlon, President & CEO of the Ad Council: "We are proud to continue our partnership with MLB Charities with this new series of PSAs that introduces Americans to a new generation of veterans. When we tested the PSAs with focus groups, audiences felt compassionate and were motivated to find out how they could provide support."

Eric Keshin, Chief Operating Officer and North American Regional Director of McCann World Group: "We at McCann Erickson are truly honored to partner with our MLB client and Tom Hanks to welcome home our Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. We believe that the general public will be as moved as we have been to hear their stories and to get to know these terrific people to whom we owe so much."

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