

# Montreal Gazette

## Let's honour Gary Carter by investing in kids and baseball

Sat Mar 10 2012

Page: B7

Section: Editorial / Op-Ed

Byline: DAVE KAUFMAN

Column: Dave Kaufman

Source: FREELANCE

Illustrations: ALLEN MCINNIS GAZETTE FILE / To honour No. 8, how about eight baseball diamonds?;

City hall has decided to ask Montrealers their thoughts on a suitable manner in which to honour Gary Carter. Here are mine:

From 2004, when the Expos left Montreal, to 2010, there was a complete lack of support for any kind of talk of the return of professional baseball to this city. But in 2010, two events put the idea of a return of baseball back into the consciousness of the average Montrealer. The first was the induction of former Expo Andre Dawson into the Baseball Hall of Fame; the second was Annakin Slayd's Remember the Expos music video, which conjured up memories that many had tried to suppress.

In the two years since, there has been a resurgence of Expos hats and clothing on the streets of Montreal, and the feel-good factor about the "good old days" has started to return. The death of Gary Carter has united a city, and Montreal wants to pay tribute.

Three ideas have so far picked up a fair amount of steam:

- Renaming a street.
- Renaming the Pie-IX or Jarry metro station.
- A public memorial to Cart-er and the

Expos, possibly at Trudeau airport.

All three ideas (and I'm sure many more) have validity. But I propose that we look toward the future of baseball in our city, and strive to make it brighter.

A tribute to Gary Carter will ultimately end up being a memorial for baseball in Montreal. I strongly believe that the best way to honour Carter is to revive the passion for baseball that this city once felt.

I propose that, with help from the corporate community, the city build - or refurbish - eight (for Carter's number while an Expo) baseball diamonds in low-income areas across Montreal Island.

This is not a cheap proposal, but the ambition of the project captures the essence of Gary Carter. He thought big, dreamed big, and helped make Montreal the toast of the major leagues.

Many of the city's baseball diamonds are either in serious disrepair or have been transformed into soccer fields. How can this generation expect the next generation to have the same passion for baseball if they don't grow up playing it?

Before people can dream of having professional baseball back in Montreal, we need to rekindle and develop their passion

for the game. That begins at the grassroots level.

I am 31 years old, and am well aware that if I ever see Major League Baseball return to Montreal, I will be attending with my grandchildren. If I'm ever lucky enough to walk into "Parc Jackie Robinson Labatt Pharmaprix," it will be because baseball returned and thrived at a grassroots level long before.

The time is now for corporate Montreal to step up to the plate and help the city honour The Kid.

It will be the kids who grew up playing at Montreal's eight Gary Carter memorial diamonds who bring the team back. Let's give them a chance to do what we could not.

DAVE KAUFMAN is host of The Kaufman Show on TSN 990 radio, which airs Monday nights at 11 p.m. as well as on iTunes.

Twitter: @thekaufmanshow

© 2012 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.