

Tourney stands as tribute to ballplayer's love of the game

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This detail of Anthony Survilla's love of baseball adorns the new concessions stand at the New Milford baseball field.

Concession stand built, dedicated in memory of BR ballplayer Anthony Survilla

From t-ball all the way through Legion ball, Anthony Survilla loved the game of baseball.

He grew up playing the sport on the New Milford baseball field. Now, two years after his death at the age of 20, Survilla's memory has earned a permanent marker on the field where he spent so many of his childhood hours.

A new concession stand, built from barn wood and donated by Jesse Benedict was dedicated during the Second Annual Anthony Survilla Baseball Tournament, Sunday, May 4. "He is a true and loyal friend to Anthony," said Anthony's mother Pat Holden.

Survilla worked with Benedict tearing down barns during summer months when he was home from college at East Stroudsburg University majoring in sports broadcasting.

"To have Anthony's name on [the concession stand] is quite a tribute to him," said Holden. "It was built for Anthony. To me - that's a huge thing. I think the community needs to know there are good people out there like Jesse. It's going to be there for years for everybody to be able to use."

A picture of Survilla was also incorporated into the building's sign.

Benedict joined Holden and son Ryan Holden along with Representative Sandra Major on home plate for the dedication ceremony. Her other son, Aaron Survilla, who was home earlier in the week, was back at college in Pittsburgh and unable to attend the tournament.

Holden thanks everyone for remembering her son. "The memories I have of watching him pitch and play first base I treasure today," said Holden.

Following the dedication, 200 red and white balloons were let go in honor of the 2003 Blue Ridge graduate. "I told Anthony to watch for those red and white balloons," said Holden as she watched them sail toward the heavens.

Junior high baseball teams from Blue Ridge, Susquehanna Community, Montrose, Mountain View and Abington Heights played in the tournament.

Mountain View won both their games to take first place in the tourney. MV pitcher Mike Wakalowski earned one of the two MVP awards by throwing a no-hitter in a five inning game against Abington Heights.

Abington Heights, the 2007 tournament champs, finished second in this year competition.

Blue Ridge's Jake Roberts also earned an MVP award for hitting a home run against Susquehanna in the first game of the day.

All tournament players were given a tee-shirt commemorating the event. Remaining shirts were sold and proceeds benefited a scholarship in Survilla's memory.