



PRESS CONTACT

Aime Dunstan

St. Helena Little League Board of Directors

707.345.1956

Fundraising@sthenalittleleague.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ST. HELENA LITTLE LEAGUE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OPENING DAY CEREMONY  
TO HONOR FOUR GENERATIONS OF HERDELL FAMILY COMMITMENT  
MARCH 14, 2026, AT CRANE PARK**

*“When a parent models community involvement and personal attachment to a cause in a positive way, that bond, that connection is generationally paid forward.” ~ Joe Herdell*

St. Helena, CA [March 9, 2026] – St. Helena Little League proudly celebrates its 65th Anniversary season on Saturday, March 14, 2026, with a special Opening Day ceremony at Crane Park. Founded in 1961, the league has been a cornerstone of youth baseball and softball in St. Helena for six and a half decades, bringing together generations of families through the love of the game.

The Opening Day festivities will begin at 9:00am and will welcome players, families, alumni, sponsors, and community members to mark this historic milestone season.

Board President Vincent Georges will deliver opening remarks honoring the league’s rich history and recognizing the businesses, volunteers, and families whose commitment has sustained St. Helena Little League for 65 years.

A special highlight will be the recognition of the **Herdell family** for four generations of volunteerism, leadership and commitment to youth sports and education — as players, coaches, teachers, mentors, and tireless supporters of both the league and the broader St. Helena community. Their enduring commitment exemplifies the spirit, sportsmanship, and service that define Little League in our town.

“One would be hard pressed to find another youth sport that captivates this community more than Little League,” says **Joe Herdell**, whose grandfather, **Vaughn Herdell**, was a founding member of Napa Valley Little League (later renamed St. Helena Little League) in 1961 and helped to build the first ball fields at Crane Park. “Hundreds of St. Helena youth play Little League baseball and softball every year, and it



brings our community together six evenings a week for three to four months. Involvement in Little League here in St. Helena is a direct connection to our community.”

What fuels this family's commitment?

“Vivid, heartwarming memories that connect generations,” says Joe, SHHS Varsity Head Coach who also has consistently served as a manager, coach and / or board member for multiple youth sports organizations in St. Helena for more than 20 years. “Everything from the simple smell of freshly cut grass at Crane Park, or playing your first Majors game on Opening Day, or watching an unexpected player make a sensational play, or putting bat to ball in a key situation, to the fulfilling emotions of watching one of your ball players really grasp the game for the first time; these are memories that stick to your core. Coaching is fulfilling in a way many things cannot match. There is no greater joy than running into a former ball player years after you coached them and briefly catching up on lost time; that ‘Hey, Coach!’ really drives it home.”

The family business, **Herdell Printing Inc.**, has also sponsored youth sports teams for 40 years. **Elliott Knapp**, son of **Lindsay Herdell-Knapp**, playing his first season of LL baseball, will be throwing the first pitch to **Peter Herdell**, starting his final year in LL in the Juniors Division – a can’t-miss moment in St. Helena Little League history!

*[PLEASE SEE ATTACHMENT FOR FURTHER DETAIL ON THIS FAMILY'S MANY CONTRIBUTIONS]*

### 2026 Fundraising Campaign Launch

Opening Day will also mark the kickoff of the league’s 2026 Capital & Community Campaign, aimed at investing in critical facility improvements that will serve players and families for decades to come.

This year’s fundraising priorities include:

- Enhanced fencing improvements to improve player and spectator safety
- Erosion mitigation projects to protect the fields and reduce short-term maintenance costs
- Field lighting installation to safely extend hours of play and accommodate the league’s continued growth



- Construction of an ADA-accessible restroom facility behind the snack shack, allowing players safe and convenient restroom access in close proximity to the fields

“These improvements are about safety, accessibility, and sustainability,” says Vincent Georges, league president. “As we celebrate 65 years, we are also looking ahead — ensuring our facilities match the heart and growth of our league, and that every player has a safe and inclusive environment to play.”

Community members and local businesses are invited to participate in supporting this transformational campaign by contacting [Sponsorships@SthHelenaLittleLeague.org](mailto:Sponsorships@SthHelenaLittleLeague.org).

### 2026 Team Sponsors and Managers

The league extends its sincere gratitude to this year’s team sponsors for their generous support:

In **Juniors Baseball**, the **Rangers** are sponsored by **Buehler Vineyards** and managed by **Jason Driscoll**. **Juniors Softball** features the **Thunderbirds** (Brannan Center, manager Rebecca Brookman) and **Cardinals** (Darrell Quirici, DDS, manager Dustin Dorman).

Led by manager **Matthew Heil**, the **Crushers** are sponsored by **Herdell Printing, Inc.** in **Intermediate Baseball**.

**Majors Baseball** includes the **Eagles** (American Legion, manager Jeff Blaum), **Red Sox** (Central Valley, manager Perry Clark), **Pirates** (Dan Wiley Photography, manager James Eyer), and **Giants** (Steve’s Hardware, manager Ted Smith).

In **Minors Baseball**, the **Jaguars** (St. Helena Optometry, manager Jimmy Martinez), **Mustangs** (Spottswoode, manager Alma Garibay), **Panthers** (St. Helena Police Officers Association, manager Adam Rotello), **Tigers** (Sutter Home, manager Ignacia Delgadillo), and **Lions** (Amizetta, manager Cole Freidmund) will compete, while the **Wolves** (Decker Vineyard Management, manager Michael Tillotson) represent **Minors Softball**.

**Super Rookies** teams include the **Lugnuts** (Gott’s Roadside, manager Madeline Breazeale), **Rivercats** (Menegon Catering, manager Joe Fillipini), and **Rockhounds** (Bettinelli Vineyards, manager Jason Tamagni).



In **Coach Pitch**, the **Seadogs** (Artisan Tile, manager Junior Coleman), **Volcanoes** (Dickenson, Peatman & Fogarty, manager Jason Ray), **Cougars** (Yes Chef Napa, manager Danny Knapp), and **Wizards** (Paintworks, manager Jake Boydston) take the field.

### Thank You

St. Helena Little League remains deeply appreciative of its sponsors, volunteers, alumni families, and individual donors whose generosity allows the league to provide scholarships, maintain facilities, and continue its mission of youth development through baseball and softball.

For more information about the 65th Anniversary season or to contribute to the 2026 fundraising campaign, please visit [sthelenalittleleague.org](http://sthelenalittleleague.org).

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About St. Helena Little League:

Founded in 1961, St. Helena Little League has served generations of Napa Valley families by providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where children learn teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership, and community pride. Now in its 65th season, the league continues its mission of inspiring young athletes and strengthening the bonds that make St. Helena such a special place to call home.