St. John Vianney Parish kicks off youth sports program

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"I think it's really cool to be one of the actual first players at my church," she said.

"... Some of my friends were signing up, and I thought it would be fun. It was my first time playing kickball. It was really fun because we don't really have a specific place for fielding," she said.

Kickball is played like baseball, but the ball is kicked instead of struck with a bat.

There are practices, but players are free to simply show up at a game and play. Delaney was one of the younger players on her team, and hopes to play again next year.

Jenna Hesher, 10, is also a member of the kickball team for grades 5-6. She and Delaney are close friends.

"We thought it would be fun to get involved in God and sports. We pray before every game; we say a Hail Mary before every game," Hesher said. "The game is all based on God, because we are praying. At the end of the game, win or lose, it is all in God's hands."

She hadn't played kickball before, but picked it up quickly, she said.

"It's really fun. I really want to do it again," Hesher said. "I really feel good about playing. I really wanted to help the church. I tried to get a lot of girls interested."

She's also thinking about going out for girls' basketball.

Jacqueline Boulet, 12, is also a member of the kickball team.

"We had never heard of kickball, so when we saw it advertised at the church, we thought it would be good to get involved," said her mother, Suzin.

The CYO team played several teams from parishes in Indianapolis, including St Luke, Immaculate Heart and Holy Spirit. The Defenders won their first game on Sept. 4.

"They don't mind when they lose and they weren't super-excited to win," Mrs. Boulet said. "It's all about fun and being on the team."

"It is still a small program (approximately 20 children), but it is historic for us. This is our first shot at athletics," Witte said. "We're really excited.

"... We have to get through the first year, and hope that more kids share in the excitement next year," he said.

Everything is new — the players, equipment, uniforms, volunteers, even the teams' name: the Defenders.

"We wanted to be defenders of the faith ... St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle," Witte said.

Since participation was lower than expected, girls from St. John Vianney Parish and St. Louis de Montfort Parish — which is also in Fishers — combined to form two kickball teams.

"It's been challenging, but really fun," Witte said. "At our first kickball game, we got hammered, but the girls kept smiling. When I asked them if they had fun, they said, 'Yes! Yes! Yes!'

"You couldn't tell (they lost)," he said. "They were happy wearing the Defenders' jerseys. We just want the kids to have the chance to play sports. It's one more way for the kids to connect at SJV."

In addition to the children, coaches and parents, Witte said, "we are very thankful for the support, friendship and charity of the athletics directors of St. Louis de Montfort and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (parishes) for helping us get our program off the ground."

St. John Vianney pastor Father Brian Dudzinski was a wide receiver on the Butler University football team. He is a big supporter of the new endeavor and attends the games, Witte said.

"It has been an absolute blast," he said. "We have all these little kids, kindergarten through second grade. We need to get them started now so we can build our CYO program around them.

"They're just so cute. One of the size small jerseys for the girls was almost the size of a handkerchief."

New executive director in place at Trinity Free Clinic in Hamilton County

CARMEL — The Trinity Free Clinic recently named Dina Ferchmin as its new executive director.

Ferchmin succeeds Maggie Charnoski in the post.

A U.S. Military Academy graduate, Ferchmin previously served as the executive director of the Cell Therapy Foundation.

Established in 2000, the Trinity Free Clinic is a non-denominational, faith-based, non-profit organization, providing medical and dental clinics for uninsured and under-insured low-income residents of Hamilton County, as referred by various churches and community organizations.

Supported by the generosity of a growing donor base, the clinic is staffed almost entirely by a corps of volunteer medical practitioners.

"It's a myth to think that with the tremendous affluence throughout Hamilton County, there aren't many low-income, uninsured and under-insured residents," Ken Boschee, chairman of the Board of Directors of Trinity Free Clinic, said in a news release.

While the clinic has grown — serving more than 16,000 residents over the past 14 years — its leaders are committed to an even greater outreach, from reaching more eligible patients to increasing funding to securing services from additional volunteers.

For more information about the Trinity Free Clinic, including its services and how to volunteer or donate, visit the Web site at www.trinityfreeclinic.org.