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PRESS RELEASE

JANICKI NAMED 2024 NEW ENGLAND LEFTY GOMEZ REGIONAL VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

The late Vernon “Lefty” Gomez was one of Babe Ruth League’s most dedicated volunteers. One of the reasons he was so committed to the program was because he witnessed firsthand the positive impact Babe Ruth League had on its young participants.

The “Lefty Gomez Volunteer of the Year” Regional Award Winner Program was introduced in 2023. The eight Babe Ruth League Regional Commissioners select one volunteer from their region, who has gone above and beyond to promote and further develop the Babe Ruth League program, to receive this prestigious award.



Karen Janicki of Raynham, Massachusetts, was selected by New England Regional Commissioner Barry Jordan as the 2024 recipient.

Jordan said, “The Lefty Gomez Volunteer of the Year Award is among the highest honors to be bestowed upon a regional volunteer. Its recipient must embody the spirit of the Babe Ruth League philosophy, which is to provide the best possible sports experience for every child wanting to play. Karen Janicki admirably and enthusiastically exemplifies this philosophy.”

Janicki’s journey with the Babe Ruth League program began in 1982 as a volunteer for the Raynham Youth Babe Ruth League. For over 14 years, Janicki supported fundraising events for the league, taking players “canning” at various local stores, and selling tickets to dances, pancake breakfasts, spaghetti dinners, comedy nights, raffles, etc., co-managed the concession stand, recruited volunteers and handled many other local league responsibilities.

In 1994 Janicki was elected Eastern Massachusetts Bambino State Secretary (now known as Eastern Massachusetts Cal Ripken), a position she still holds today.

Janicki also assists her husband Mike (former Eastern Massachusetts District 1 Commissioner and current New England Assistant Regional Commissioner/Eastern Massachusetts Cal Ripken State Commissioner) with his administrative tasks and organizing activities/events for Eastern Massachusetts and the New England Babe Ruth Leagues. One such event has been the annual Babe Ruth Day with the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park, where New England Regional Representative teams for baseball and softball get the chance to parade on the field and get the full red carpet treatment as they cheer on the Red Sox.

Janicki also served as a member of the Host Committee for the 2009 and 2012 Cal Ripken World Series hosted by Winchester, Massachusetts (Sachem Youth Baseball). She played a key role in helping design and sell various souvenirs to support the Sachem Youth Babe Ruth League.

For over 42 years, Karen Janicki has inspired volunteers to serve as mentors providing positive support, advice, and guidance to youth participating on Babe Ruth teams throughout the New England Region. She is well respected throughout her community and has helped develop Babe Ruth League, locally, statewide, regionally, and nationally.

Babe Ruth League, Inc. is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to developing better citizens by providing properly supervised baseball and softball competition for 4 through 18-year-old players. It is the basic intent of Babe Ruth League that every player who has a desire to play the sport is allowed to participate and have fun.

For Immediate Release to All Media