

## SECOND FRONT PAGE

## A new field of dreams

BY DAVE PAYNE  
DAILY NEWS CORRESPONDENT

At long last, after an hour of speeches and introductions that included San Francisco Giants president Peter Magowan and Giants pitcher Jason Schmidt by Giants broadcaster Duane Kuiper, the Blue Nine and the Warriors teams representing the Junior Giants program played the dedication game at the newly renovated Jack Farrell Park Baseball Field in East Palo Alto yesterday.

"This is really a nice field," said 11-year-old Denzel Jackson, the captain and shortstop for the Blue Nine who confirmed he was named after Denzel Washington. "It's going to be fun playing here."

Nobody kept score. Nobody cared who won. The players batted off a pitching machine, and were given instructions by young coaches on their batting. That, noted Junior Giants leagues commissioner and former Giants and A's pitching great Vida Blue, "is what the program is all about."

The teams were playing on a field that rivals any youth league baseball facility anywhere. The Giants Community Fund, Good Tidings Foundation and Schmidt combined to contribute \$100,000 for the refurbishing of the facility, including infield and outfield sod, irrigation, base-path cinder, fencing, backstop and concrete work.

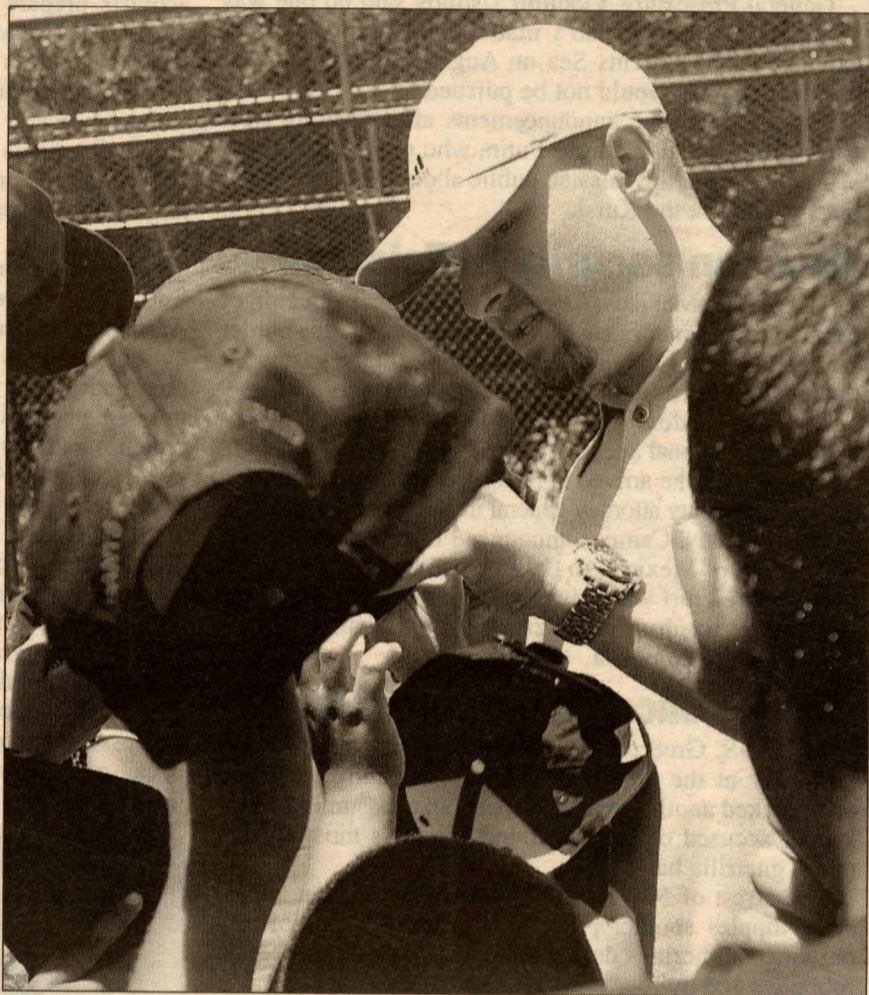
Among other contributors to the field renovation through grants were the city of East Palo Alto, San Mateo County Office of Housing and California Department of Parks and Recreation.

"When I first saw the field, my response was 'Wow!'" said Schmidt, accompanied by his wife Bethany

See FIELD, page 61

## JUNIOR GIANTS —

Giants' pitcher Jason Schmidt, below, signs hats and baseballs during his guest appearance at the reopening of Jack Ferrel Park in East Palo Alto yesterday. "Junior Giants" members, right, celebrated the reopening of Jack Ferrel Park with food and baseball. Daily News photos by Avra Goldman.



## SPORTS

## FIELD

FROM PAGE 3

and 18-month-old daughter Makynlee. "I didn't play on anything this nice as a kid. Just sitting here makes me feel like a kid again; almost making me want to return to living my childhood."

Schmidt, who will take a 5-5 record into tomorrow's start against the Los Angeles Dodgers at Pacific Bell Park, donated \$25,000 to the project. Magowan also noted Schmidt has contributed hundreds of dollars purchasing tickets for kids to attend Giants games.

"It's heartwarming to see the completion of this field one year after this venture was in the talking stages," Magowan said. "I saw this place before the renovation began, and the change is next to a miracle. I'm hopeful the community will be proud enough of this facility to keep it looking this way."

Impressed with the singing of the national anthem by 10-year-old Jilil Jackson and the Boys' and Girls' Club Choir of East Palo Alto's rendition of "Take Me Out To The Ball Game" before the ceremony, Magowan invited both for a repeat performance at a Giants' home game this season. East Palo Alto councilwoman

Sharifa Wilson expressed her excitement about the reconstructed baseball facility, thanking the Giants and many others involved in completing the project.

"We have been trying to revitalize this community for over the last 10 years to serve our community but, more importantly, our children," Wilson told the crowd. "I'm pleased the Giants have decided to invest in this community and this park, and we want to make sure the residents and children take care of it."

Wilson presented the Giants, Good Tidings Foundation (GTF) and Schmidt with certificates of appreciation from the City Council. Acknowledging GTF and its founder Larry Harper, Wilson said the council had proclaimed Friday "Good Tidings Foundation and Larry Harper Day" in East Palo Alto.

Blue praised local Junior Giants coach Gene Tate, calling him the "cornerstone of the program since its beginning." Tate was unable to attend the ceremony because of a family reunion he was attending in Atlanta, so Blue presented a Giants' jersey from manager Dusty Baker intended for Tate to Tate's son Jibreel.