



Built to Lead

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GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES NEW MLB YOUTH ACADEMY AT ROBERTO CLEMENTE STATE PARK

***New Youth Baseball and Softball Academy at Roberto Clemente State Park
Expected to Triple Youth Participation in Bronx Park's Programs***

Partnership Between Major League Baseball, Major League Baseball Players Association, Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities and New York State Parks

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced a partnership between New York State, Major League Baseball, the Major League Baseball Players Association and Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities will create a youth baseball and softball academy at Roberto Clemente State Park in the Bronx. The academy will immediately serve at least 1,500 youth at Roberto Clemente State Park, tripling the number currently participating in the park's baseball programs. The renovated baseball and softball facility will be funded by \$6.5 million in state funding, \$4 million from Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, and \$750,000 from New York Yankees designated hitter Alex Rodriguez, and will be renamed the MLB Youth Academy at Roberto Clemente State Park.

"We must invest in the next generation of New Yorkers and give them every opportunity to grow and succeed," **Governor Cuomo said**. "Ensuring our communities have safe areas for outdoor activities is fundamental to a child's upbringing and this great partnership will provide the children of the Bronx an exceptional new facility and the opportunity to develop essential skills they will draw on throughout their lives."

Commissioner of Baseball Robert D. Manfred, Jr. said, "Major League Baseball, the players and clubs have prioritized giving young people, particularly those in underserved communities, the opportunity to play baseball and softball. We are proud to be a part of this public-private project to develop the MLB Youth Academy at Roberto Clemente State Park in the Bronx which we believe will establish the next generation of New York's baseball legacy."

Alex Rodriguez, New York Yankees 14 time All-Star and 4th on the all-time Home Run list, said, "It's an honor to partner with MLB, Governor Cuomo, MLBPA, the State Parks department and Harlem RBI on a project that will bring a top notch baseball field

and programming to kids in the Bronx. These kids already have a special connection to baseball since Yankee Stadium is right in their backyard. I hope this park will give them a chance to experience the game and dream big from the field as well as in the stands.”

The MLB Youth Academy at Roberto Clemente State Park

With support from this partnership, State Parks will build a multi-purpose field to the north of the existing baseball field, where Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities will offer both baseball and softball programming. The Roberto Clemente State Park site will dramatically increase the number of youth Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities serves. Although open to all New York City youth, the MLB Youth Academy at Roberto Clemente State Park will serve as a central location for Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities programs in the Bronx and Upper Manhattan. The facility will be administered and operated by Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities, which will supply all umpiring fees, basic baseball equipment and provide transportation options for teams to get to and from the state park. Official baseball programming will begin in spring 2017 with softball starting on the new multi-purpose field upon its completion in spring 2018. Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities expects to immediately serve at least 1,500 youth at Roberto Clemente State Park, tripling the number of youth currently participating in the park’s baseball programs.

Partnership Between New York State, Major League Baseball, Major League Baseball Players Association and Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities

Building on more than \$50 million in previous improvements at Roberto Clemente State Park through the Governor’s NY Parks 2020 Initiative, the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery will provide Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery assistance of up to \$5 million to finish the fields, including a install a new tee-ball field south of the existing ball field, construct plaza space adjacent to the existing field, and make other general improvements throughout the new ballfield complex. State Parks is also contributing \$1.5 million for field improvements and general park upgrades needed for the academy.

Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association are making their contributions to the project via the MLB-MLBPA Youth Development Foundation, which is a joint fund to help grow the game at the youth and amateur levels. The organizations will devote more than \$4 million to build new sports facilities and sponsor new Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities programs to serve New York City youth in the park.

As a participant in youth development programs since a young age, New York Yankees designated hitter Alex Rodriguez has been a long-time supporter of organizations that use sports as a catalyst to develop the skills students need to succeed in the classroom, their communities and their future careers. His work with Harlem RBI is a continuation of these efforts, and in recognition of his \$750,000 contribution to the program, the new field at Roberto Clemente State Park will be named “Alex Rodriguez Field.”

In addition to providing programs for kids starting as early as age 5, Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities will expand its capacity to provide a highly competitive baseball and softball program for elite players and teams. Along with high-level instruction and competitive play, Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities will also explore the option of hosting occasional baseball and softball tournaments and/or scouting combines for youth in and around New York City.

Major League Baseball Players Association Executive Director Tony Clark said, “The Major League Baseball Players Association is honored to be joining with our longest-tenured member, Alex Rodriguez, Major League Baseball, the State of New York and Harlem RBI, to fund the creation of the MLB Youth Academy at Roberto Clemente State Park in the Bronx. For as long as the game has been played, baseball and New York have had a special relationship, and the creation of the Youth Academy in the Bronx will only serve to strengthen this bond. Combining the Youth Academy model with the great work of Harlem RBI will help provide New York City youth with additional opportunities to develop their athletic and life skills in a fun and safe environment.”

Rich Berlin, Executive Director of Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities said, “The opportunity to expand our programming to more children in our City is an honor and a privilege, particularly at a park whose namesake – Roberto Clemente – is emblematic of the characteristics we try to instill in our kids – hard work, dedication, perseverance, leadership and community service. We are grateful to Governor Cuomo, Commissioner Manfred, Tony Clark and Alex Rodriguez for their willingness to consider non-traditional partnerships that afford more of our City’s youth access to programming and services that we know will have a positive impact on the trajectory of their lives.”

Rose Harvey, Commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, said, “This public-private partnership will significantly enhance baseball programming at the park named for baseball legend Roberto Clemente, and most importantly, provide a wide range of recreation and education programs that will help build mind and muscle for young people in the community.”

Lisa Bova-Hiatt, Executive Director of Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery, said, “Supplementing our initial investment to promote resiliency in Roberto Clemente State Park, this undertaking demonstrates the State’s commitment to revitalizing and strengthening community assets that were damaged during recent storms. GOSR is thrilled to be part of this collaborative project, which leverages public and private resources to create a one-of-a-kind program that will make an extraordinary difference in the lives of so many New Yorkers. Together, we can achieve the ultimate goal of ensuring that the park is accessible and engaging to residents of the Bronx, while making it better able to withstand the impacts of future weather events.”

Improvements to Roberto Clemente State Park

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The baseball and softball academy builds on a greater than \$50 million transformation of Roberto Clemente State Park – including several projects that will help support the baseball and softball programs in the park – launched as part of Governor Cuomo's commitment to revitalizing the state park system and expanding access to outdoor recreation. Work has begun on a \$28 million two-year project to rebuild the park's bulkhead along the Harlem River with a more storm resilient design and while greening and enhancing the adjacent esplanade area as a more inviting park setting, including a new intertidal area. Construction is underway on a \$7 million project to rehabilitate the upper plaza area where most of the park's 1.3 million visitors enter the park. The project will replace the structural steel supports and decking for the plaza, rebuild the crumbling staircase to the lower plaza area, open up views to the park, improve landscaping and relocate the life-size bronze statue of Roberto Clemente to a more prominent place at the park's gateway. The bulkhead/esplanade and upper plaza projects are expected to be completed in 2017, after which a \$7 million project to revitalize the park's northern shoreline area and lower plaza area will begin. Located adjacent to the new inter-tidal area, the lower plaza will feature a rebuilt picnic area complex, performance area, game space, seating areas, improved landscaping and interpretive experience.

The 25-acre waterfront Roberto Clemente State Park offers a variety of recreational and cultural activities year-round. The facilities include a multi-purpose recreation building, an Olympic-size pool complex, ball fields, basketball courts, picnic areas, playgrounds and a waterfront promenade. The park opened in 1973 and is named for the humanitarian and first Latino-American inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, who died in a plane crash while delivering aid to earthquake victims in Nicaragua.

Beyond 2018, Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities will explore the feasibility of capital improvements for the south field playing area, expansion of the multi-purpose field, and the park's maintenance building area to allow for recreational play and instruction for children ages 5-12. If feasible, the park's maintenance facility may be renovated to add a year-round center of baseball/softball training and coaching instruction.

NY Parks 2020

The park improvements reflect Governor Cuomo's commitment to revitalizing the state park system and expanding access to outdoor recreation. The Governor's [NY Parks 2020 program](#) is a multi-year commitment to leverage \$900 million in private and public funding for State Parks from 2011 to 2020. The Governor's 2016-17 Executive Budget allocates \$90 million toward this initiative. In addition, this year the Governor announced the [Connect Kids to Parks](#) program, which provides free day-use park entry to fourth-grade students and their families, and creates a new transportation grant program to help students from underserved schools visit state parks and historic sites.

Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities

Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities provides inner-city youth with opportunities to play, learn and grow. Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities uses the power of teams to coach, teach and inspire youth to recognize their potential and realize their dreams. Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities is a unique, year-round youth development program based in East Harlem, New York. Since its founding in 1991, Harlem Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities has grown to serve more than 1,700 boys and girls annually in both East Harlem and the South Bronx, ages 5-22, providing them with year-round sports, educational and enrichment activities.

MLB Youth Academy

This project is the tenth announced MLB Youth Academy, joining other facilities in development in Dallas, Kansas City and San Francisco. The first MLB Youth Academy opened in Compton, California in 2006. The network has since grown to include operational facilities in Cincinnati, Houston, New Orleans, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. MLB Youth Academies are designed to provide baseball and softball instruction at little to no cost to participants, while also encouraging academic success and mentorship.

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