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Wednesday, 20 January 2010 14:53

The National Hockey League Players' Association has donated 30 new sets of hockey equipment to Ramsey County Mighty Kids Steering Committee, courtesy of the NHLPA's Goals and Dreams fund. This donation will give equipment to 30 youth players and will help many Saint Paul area hockey participants.

Since 1998, the Mighty Kids Inner-City Hockey Steering Committee and staff from the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Division, and Saint Paul Community Education have met with representatives from Saint Paul area youth hockey associations and the Minnesota Hockey Diversity Committee to develop a framework for a more comprehensive hockey program which addresses the barriers that have deterred inner-city youth from participating in the sport of hockey.

The Mighty Kids Steering Committee has had great success in getting our diverse community youth involved in the sport of hockey by providing ice time, equipment and instructors. The primary objective of this program is hockey/skating skill development, mentoring, building relationships within the community and developing self-esteem. The program accommodates more than 400 kids per year.

According to the committee, the NHLPA's Goals and Dreams grant will provide 30 youth hockey players with equipment and the opportunity to stay involved in the sport as they move to the next level. We are extremely appreciative to have received the grant.

Chairman of the Goals and Dreams fund, Devin Smith, commented on the success of the program. "Over the last 10 years, NHL players have donated more than \$17 million to fund and

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assist grassroots hockey programs around the world. We've sent equipment everywhere from Australia to South Africa, Europe, Malaysia and North America. The biggest obstacle in participating in hockey is the cost of equipment. Our goal is to bridge that gap for less fortunate children".

In 1999, the NHLPA launched the Goals and Dreams fund as a way for the players to give something back to the game they love. The players' program has donated full sets of hockey equipment to more than 13,000 economically challenged children in 22 countries and assisted with upgrades and the building of hundreds of arenas world-wide. To date, Goals and Dreams has donated more than \$17-million to grassroots hockey programs around the world making it the largest program of its kind.

For more information on the NHLPA, please visit www.nhlpa.com.