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## Horvath Wins MVP Award

Hershberger named Tournament Player of the Year; Jorgensen named League Player of the Year

*Michigan City, IN 11-21-09 (updated 11/24/09)*

The 2009 Awards Banquet - presented by Home Comfort Experts - is in the books! With special guest Jeff Hall of the Long Haul Bombers in attendance, the crowd of 125 plus people were excited to see the Suburban/SKS team and the Street Kids/Suburban South team accept awards and officially close out the 2009 season. Along with the award winners, there were some great and unforgettable moments, but we'll get to that later...

Despite a slow start and a few injuries, veteran outfielder Joe Horvath was named the 2009 Street Kids/Suburban South Most Valuable Player, presented by Starcraft Bus.

With 12 first place votes, six second place votes and nine third place votes, Horvath's 345 total points were easily more than second place finisher TJ Jorgensen, who finished with 250 points and third place finisher Mark Hershberger who had 230 points.

Chris Firebaugh (210 points), Lanny Fisher (190) and Scott Martin rounded out the order of finish for the six nominees.

Mark Hershberger took home the Tournament Player of the Year award, with 325 total points (11 first place votes), easily enough to finish ahead of Horvath (235) and Firebaugh (230). Hershberger also was named the Northern Indiana Player of the Year by the National Softball Association. Jack Carter of the NSA announced the winner at the banquet on Saturday.

TJ Jorgensen, the 2005 overall MVP winner, had 11 first place votes and 330 total points to finish ahead of Horvath (275 total points) for the League Player of the Year honor. Lanny Fisher (235) finished third behind Horvath and Jorgensen.

Kalei Enterline was a runaway winner of the Gold Glove Award, given to the best defensive player. Enterline received 11 votes. Unlike the awards above, the Gold Glove award is only voted on by SKS players. Scott Martin, who won the 2009 Rookie of the Year award, finished second with six votes.

Shane Varga was named the Comeback Player of the Year after returning to the field for 11 games following his battle with Hodgkins Lymphoma cancer. Varga gave a compassionate speech on Saturday night that got brought many smiles to the crowd of 116 people. But nothing was more emotional on Saturday than that of Mark Hershberger.

On top of being named the tournament player of the year, Hershberger received what many call the biggest award you can get, the Street Kids Care Humanitarian Award. After already being choked up once in the night for winning the first award, Hershberger was beside himself with emotion at the podium.

**Chris  
Douglass**

*2009 Suburban/SKS  
Co-Most Valuable  
Player*



**Guy  
Morton**

*2009 Suburban/SKS  
Co-Most Valuable  
Player*



**Jeff  
Tedder**

*2009 Suburban X  
Co-Player of the Year*



**Matt  
Lavender**

*2009 Suburban X  
Co-Player of the Year*



**Guy  
Morton**

*2009 Suburban X  
Co-Player of the Year*



Read more below about Hershberger's emotional night.

Other award winners on the night included:

Suburban/SKS Co-MVP: Chris Douglass  
Suburban/SKS Co-MVP: Guy Morton  
Suburban/SKS Gold Glove Winner: Brian Baker  
Suburban/SKS Tournament Player of the Year: Chris Douglass  
Suburban/SKS Offensive Player of the Year: Pook Filkins  
Suburban/SKS Comeback Player of the Year: Jeff Taylor  
Suburban/SKS Home Run Champion: Jeff Taylor  
Suburban/SKS League Player of the Year: Jeff Taylor  
Suburban/SKS Rookie of the Year: Mike Ortiz  
Suburban X co-Player of the Year: Matt Lavender  
Suburban X co-Player of the Year: Guy Morton  
Suburban X co-Player of the Year: Jeff Tedder  
Suburban/SKS Coaches Award: BJ Roberts  
Street Kids/Suburban South Coaches Award: JR Shapiro  
Street Kids/Suburban South Offensive Player of the Year: Joe Horvath

It was a night filled with excitement, great food, emotions and capped by a wonderful speech by SKS player and cancer survivor, Shane Varga.

The night began with a fantastic chicken dinner, served by the staff at Blue Chip Casino. Then the host, Terry Patesel, began kicked off the night thanking everyone for coming and the first person on the night to speak was former gold glove winner Brian Lange.

"I am happy to be here, seeing some old friends and sharing in this exciting night," said the former SK player. "I am here tonight to introduce my friend, Lanny Fisher."

Fisher took to the stage for the last time as a competitive softball player, capping a remarkable 23-year career that included 11 state championships, 29 national tournament appearances and major world championship, coached by his legendary and late father, the hall of famer Al Fisher. He thanked the many people who were there along the way with him and made the start of the night a great one.

Jack Carter of the NSA was on hand to hand out the Northern Indiana NSA Player of the Year awards, and spoke for a brief moment. Following Jack, Terry Patesel introduced the two coaches that received the awards for "coach of the year" honors: JR Shapiro of SKS and BJ Roberts of Suburban/SKS. Roberts made the announcement that he would not be returning to the Suburban/SKS team as manager in 2010, as he is looking into new options for the future. He leaves on good terms with the team and organization and has not ruled out a return down the road. Shapiro thanked his teammates and was clearly surprised by the award.

BJ Roberts handed out the Suburban/SKS awards (winners above and to the right) and guest speakers handed out different SKS awards. Prior to the SKS awards, Karl Swihart of the CCAC Pro Shop and the NSA handed out an individual award to each SKS player for their accomplishment on finishing as America's top rated NSA "B" team.

"Being not just an NSA official but a sponsor of SKS, this gives me great pleasure," Swihart said to the crowd of 125 plus.

After each player received their award from Swihart and renown umpire Terry Sherrill, each player got a picture with special guest Jeff Hall.

Terry Patesel presented the first award, which was given to Joe Horvath for winning the batting title and also the triple crown. Chad Doan, a long time member of SKS, presented the league player of the year award to TJ Jorgensen and veteran pitcher Steve Schroeder of the former AMD/Worth/Forest River team was on hand to present the tournament player of



the year award to a very emotional Mark Hershberger.

"This is stupid," the big man said, trying his hardest to fight back the tears, but was unable to do so. "I just want to thank my teammates for always showing up ready to play and giving it 100% and being on base for me to hit you in, or whatever. This means a lot and thank you."

You can see the video highlight of Hersh's speech later this week.

Patesel returned to the podium to present Joe Horvath with his first MVP award, and made sure he thanked the most important person right away.

"My girlfriend, Esme, reminded me that I have to thank her," the veteran outfielder said with a smile. "Really, this is a nice accomplishment, as most of you know, I battled through some injuries but as a team we went through our own ups and downs. But we persevered and came out as a world series finalist. I want to thank TJ for all the work he has done, and I don't think he gets enough credit for the things he puts into this. Tonight, this whole thing, was his hard work, and I just want to end this by thanking him."

Very kind words from Horvath, who was not the only person on the night to thank Jorgensen. Later in the evening, Hershberger presented Jorgensen with a special "manager/owner" award, the idea coming from coach Teddy Panagakos, who could not make it after having an emergency gall bladder surgery. Hershberger presented the award to Jorgensen with the entire team at the front of the room, humbling Jorgensen.

There were special guest appearances by Tammy Robison of Memorial Hospital and Cindy Weldy Lamb, mother of cancer survivor Dillion Weldy, as well as Jerry Slack and Cory Ray of Jackson, Michigan.

"No one here really knows me," said Slack. "But we came here tonight to tell all of you about a tournament we held for charity in our home town. We could not have gotten the inspiration to do that if it wasn't for TJ and Street Kids Care."

Tammy Robison, on top of talking about how wonderful Street Kids Care is, presented the most amazing award on the night.

"I am pleased to be here tonight to present an award that tops all other awards," she said. "Because this award doesn't reward you for home runs, or how many tournament wins you get. This award is for the great plays you made off the field. The Street Kids Care Humanitarian Award is the pinnacle of achievement for any player who sets others before him. Tonight's winner of the humanitarian award is someone that many of you never thought you would see up here accepting this award. But tonight's winner has one of the biggest hearts you can imagine. And that big heart melts every time his little buddy Dillion Weldy wraps his arms around him. It is my pleasure to present this award to Mark Hershberger."

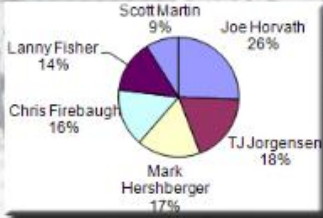
When Hershberger came to the front to a standing ovation, his eyes were already filling with tears. He stood at the front after hugging Tammy and just shook his head as the crowd gave him yet another ovation.

"I met Dillion in January and it was like he was my own," said Hershberger, again fighting the tears. "Right off the bat, it was unbelievable. We had an attachment that was... unbelievable. He clung to me, I clung to him. I can't explain it. I'm just speechless. All I can say is thank you. To everyone involved in Street Kids Care, you took a pretty big guy and squished him down to nothing."

*More below...*

**2009 Most Valuable Player**

Player	1st	2nd	3rd	Total Points
Joe Horvath	12	6	9	345
TJ Jorgensen	7	6	10	250
Mark Hershberger	6	9	4	230
Chris Firebaugh	7	4	6	210
Lanny Fisher	4	9	4	190
Scott Martin	3	4	4	120



*2009 Most Valuable Player*

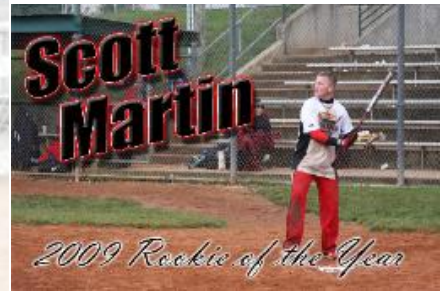
**Joe Horvath**

**STARCRAFT BUS**  
a division of Forest River, Inc.



**Brian Baker**

*2009 Suburban CKE Gold Glove Winner*



**Scott Martin**

*2009 Rookie of the Year*

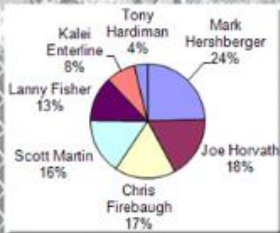


**Joe Horvath**

*2009 Offensive Player of the Year and Triple Crown Winner*

**Mark Hershberger**

*2009 Tournament Player of the Year*



**2009 Tournament Player of the Year**

Player	1st	2nd	3rd	Total Points
Mark Hershberger	11	8	5	325
Joe Horvath	6	10	3	235
Chris Firebaugh	7	6	6	230
Scott Martin	7	3	8	210
Lanny Fisher	5	5	4	170
Kalei Enterline	1	3	12	110
Tony Hardiman	1	3	0	50

**Shane Varga**

*2009 Comeback Player of the Year*

**Mark Hershberger**

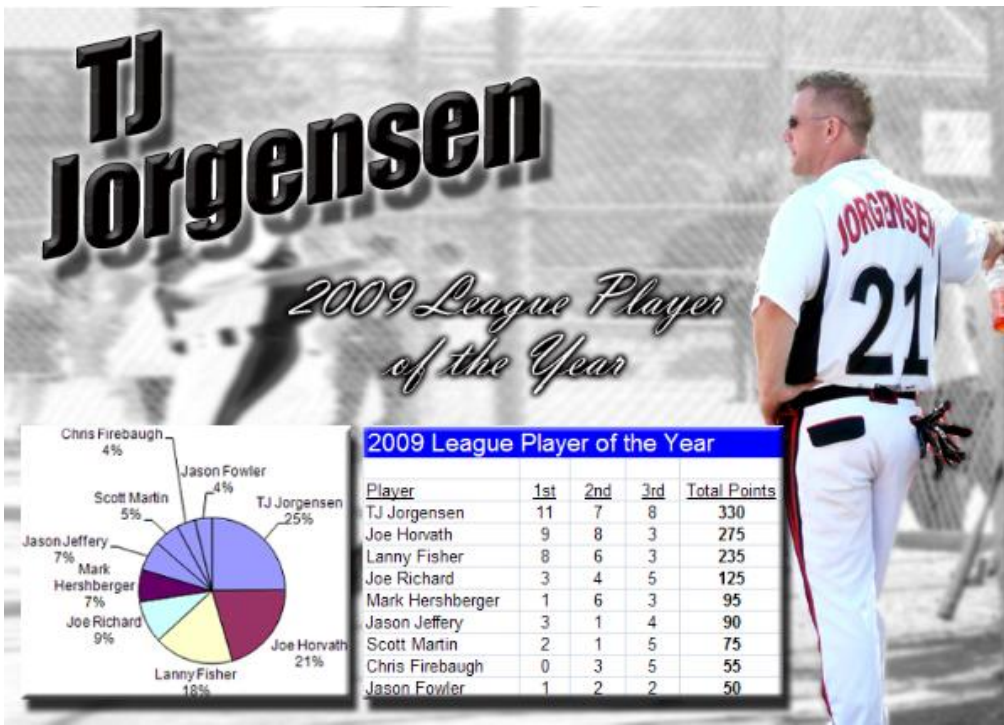
**Street Kids**  
*2009 Humanitarian Award Winner*

**JR Shapiro**

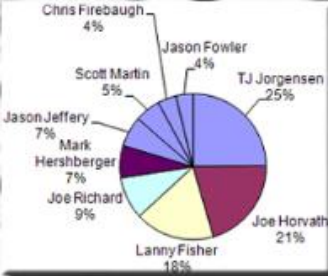
*2009 Coach of the Year*

# TJ Jorgensen

*2009 League Player of the Year*



Player	1st	2nd	3rd	Total Points
TJ Jorgensen	11	7	8	330
Joe Horvath	9	8	3	275
Lanny Fisher	8	6	3	235
Joe Richard	3	4	5	125
Mark Hershberger	1	6	3	95
Jason Jeffery	3	1	4	90
Scott Martin	2	1	5	75
Chris Firebaugh	0	3	5	55
Jason Fowler	1	2	2	50



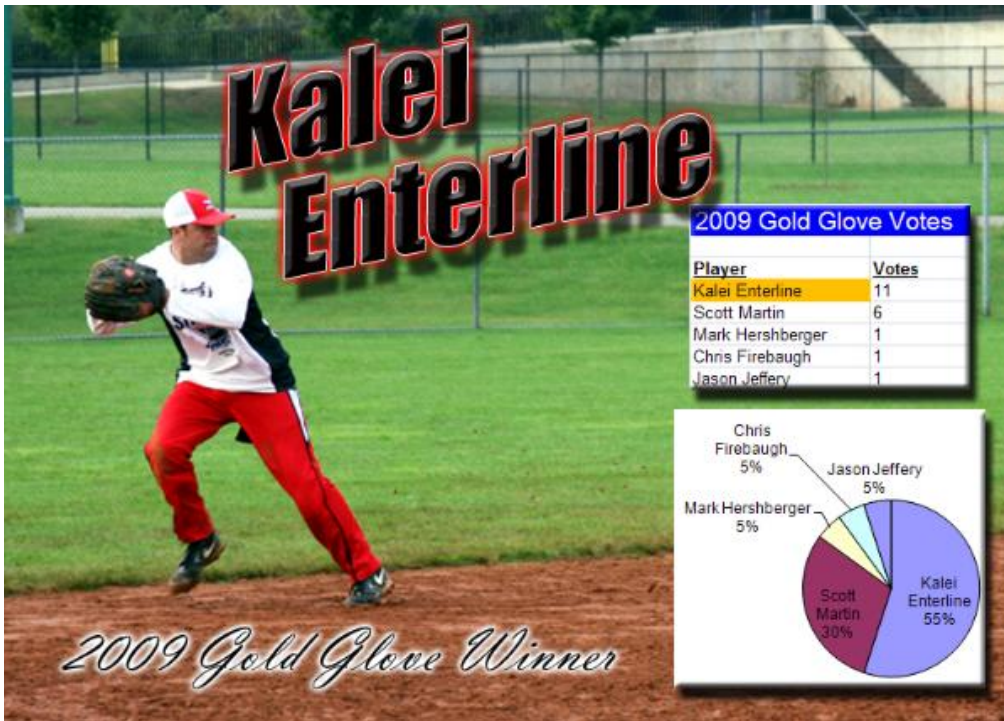
## Mike Ortiz

*2009 Suburban/SKS Rookie of the Year*

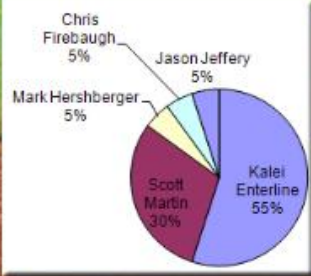


# Kalei Enterline

*2009 Gold Glove Winner*




Player	Votes
Kalei Enterline	11
Scott Martin	6
Mark Hershberger	1
Chns Firebaugh	1
Jason Jeffery	1



## "Pook" Filkins

*2009 Suburban/SKS Offensive Player of the Year*



Following the Humanitarian award presentation, Jorgensen took to the podium and reminded people of what Street Kids Care is all about.

"People will continue to make jokes and laugh, but over 3 million visitors have been on the website in 2009 alone, and that makes what we are doing pretty special," he said. "I continue to encourage each and every one of you to take what you've seen here and take it past Street Kids Care and to continue to get others inspired, like Cory Ray and Jerry Slack who we heard from earlier tonight, so that they can go out and make a difference. Because once we do that, we are not just making a difference here, but we are changing the world."

After Jorgensen spoke, he introduced one of the highlights of the night, SKS teammate and cancer survivor, Shane Varga.

"It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2009 Comeback Player of the Year to Shane Varga," Jorgensen said as Varga took to the podium.

Varga's speech was so wonderful that we will not share it with you now, but you can see the speech in its entirety later this week on [StreetKidsSoftball.com](http://StreetKidsSoftball.com).

The evening closed with softball icon Jeff Hall, one of the most charismatic players that ever played. On top of being the most recognized name on a softball bat today (currently has 11 Jeff Hall model Worth bats), he keeps busy on the Long Haul Bombers stadium power tour, where he and other super major players tour the country and put on a show in major league stadiums prior to games.

When Hall was introduced, the first words out of his mouth summed up the night.

"Wow," he said. "What can you say to all of this. I cant go any further without first congratulating the 2009 NSA top rated B teams in America, Street Kids Softball."

After talking about many things, including his personal life, how he became the player he is today, he also talked about what he learned about Street Kids Softball after spending countless hours on the website. He was kind enough to email a copy of his speech to us to share with you an excerpt here:

"When I decided to do some extensive research about street kids care, I was amazed to discover some wonderful things about you guys. I learned that:

- a. I learned that a softball team, when driven with the right motivation, can organize a blood drive and actually raise enough blood to save 75 lives right here in South Bend, Indiana.
- b. I learned that a softball team can dress up in pink jerseys and win a softball tournament, dedicating it to all those brave women fighting against breast cancer.
- c. I learned that a softball team, when given the opportunity to do so, can step into the lives of people like Dillion Weldy, a 10-year-old cancer survivor and create a long lasting friendship that will carry with that young man for years to come.
- d. I learned that a softball team can take the lanes at a local bowling alley and spend time making other sick children feel good, even if its for one day.
- e. I learned that a softball team, when given the playing field to do so, can organized two wonderful "opening day" events, where children with cancer and their families can come out and play ball against this caring, and wonderful group of men.
- f. I learned that a softball team, when faced with the reality of the fact that poverty and homelessness is alive in every community, will step up and volunteer at Faith Mission in Elkhart, willing to go the extra mile to make sure those people are fed.
- g. I learned that a softball team will go into the local childrens hospital and spend time with other children privately, getting to know them, making them laugh, and showing them that with courage, anything can happen.
- h. I learned that a softball team, clad in pink shirts, will take to the streets with thousands of others, and walk for breast cancer awareness.
- i. I learned that a softball team will spend 18 straight hours walking around a track for Relay For Life, raising money and awareness for the American Cancer Society.
- j. I learned that a softball team, when remembering that young children that are not going through cancer or illness still need that special someone to show them guidance, will spend an afternoon at the local Boys and Girls Club with kids.
- k. I learned that a softball team can raise toys for the Toys for Tots by putting on a golf outing.
- l. I learned that a softball team will stand in the down pouring freezing rain to help hand out boxes of food for Feed the Children to people that cant afford to feed their own families.
- m. But most importantly, I learned what a softball team can do when they rally behind one of their own who was diagnosed with cancer.

"The way you guys have huddled around Shane Varga, your friend and teammate, when he was at his worst, is something that I will always remember about Street Kids Softball. Shane, I read your entire page and what a tough, sad at times, but wonderful and INSPIRATIONAL story you have. You used your illness as a way to change other peoples lives, and you showed that your faith in God and determination to beat cancer is what it took to do just that. You are an amazing person and these people, the players on the street kids and suburban-street kids softball teams, are an example of what the sport is TRULY about. Its not just about hitting home runs, or winning tournaments, its about winning lives... making friends with people like Dillion... feeding the hungry... and beating cancer."

The entire event was only supposed to last about three hours, but turned out to be about four and a half, but what a memorable night it was.

This concludes the 2009 Street Kids and Suburban/SKS softball season, but the website is always changing! Look for several new announcements in the coming days, including the newest team to join the SKS franchise.

*Note: All of the pictures will be available online in a couple of weeks.*

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