



# BROOKLYN CYCLONES

NEW YORK-PENNSYLVANIA LEAGUE

2009 JOHN H. JOHNSON AWARD SUBMISSION

## OVERVIEW

The Brooklyn Cyclones have been an industry leader since the team's inception in 2001. The team has led the entire Short-Season classification in attendance and revenue in each of its nine seasons, garnered worldwide publicity, and become one of the most popular teams in all of minor league baseball. In doing so, the Cyclones have introduced -- and established -- the MiLB brand and product in the New York market, creating an unrivaled demand, awareness, and presence for minor league baseball in the country's sports and media capital.

The Cyclones have drawn over 2.5 million fans to KeySpan Park, reaching the one- and two-million milestones faster than any club in Short-Season history. Brooklyn is the only Short-Season team ever to draw over 300,000 fans in a single season, and to rank in MiLB's top 10 in average attendance, accomplishing both feats twice. The Cyclones have never ranked outside of MiLB's top 17 in that category.

The Brooklyn club is a contributing community member, throughout the borough and throughout the city of New York. In addition to creating and maintaining several fundraising and education-oriented community programs, the Cyclones have made nearly \$2,000,000 in cash and in-kind donations since 2000.

The Cyclones have been honored with the Bob Freitas Award for outstanding minor league operations (2005), and have twice been the recipient of the NYPL's Vincent McNamara Award, as the league's most outstanding club (2003, 2009).

Brooklyn has received national spotlight, not only for baseball's historic return to the borough, but for the Cyclones' creative and unique promotions, including this year's "Baracklyn Cyclones" and "Bellies & Baseball."

The Brooklyn Baseball Gallery, housed at KeySpan Park, serves not only as a headquarters for some of the team's most successful programs, but also as a tribute to baseball's past, present, and future. Countless baseball legends have made appearances at Cyclones games and events, including Hall of Famers Duke Snider, Tom Seaver, Gary Carter, Jim Palmer, Sandy Koufax, Juan Marichal, and Tommy Lasorda.

The Cyclones have enjoyed success on the field, as well, winning a New York-Penn League (NYPL) championship, four McNamara Division titles, and two NYPL Wild Cards. Brooklyn has been home to 21 future major leaguers, and has provided a first-class environment for over a dozen rehabbing big-leaguers.

Brooklyn has been one of MiLB's most successful and popular teams for nearly a decade, and a champion of the Minor Leagues' brand and philosophy, bringing minor league baseball to millions of new fans in the New York market, and beyond. ■



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## IN THE COMMUNITY

The Brooklyn Cyclones are an active, positive, and productive force in the Brooklyn community, raising funds and awareness for a variety of needy and worthwhile causes and entities. Since the team's inception, the Cyclones have made nearly \$2,000,000 in cash and in-kind donations to the Brooklyn -- and New York -- community.

The Cyclones' community involvement, however, is about more than just money. The team has developed several programs that benefit the team's neighboring communities, and Cyclones' staff members, players, and coaches have made lasting impacts on the people in those communities.

The Cyclones' relationships with the team's community neighbors are of the utmost importance, and the cultivation of those relationships is among the organization's most valued goals.

Listed below (alphabetically) are some of the programs the Cyclones have implemented to that end:

**24 Hours of Baseball:** In 2007 & 2008, the Cyclones front office staff played a marathon 24 straight hours of baseball to raise money for charity. The staff played a total of 12 games against teams of all ages, shapes, and sizes (including little leaguers, the Coney Island Freak Show, government officials, media members, Military All-Stars, and a team of fans). "24" raised \$17,500, which was donated to HeartShare Human Services of New York, Autism Speaks, and the New York-Penn League Charitable Foundation.

**Alzheimer's Memory Walk:** This season, the Brooklyn Cyclones teamed up with the Alzheimer's Association and hosted the 2009 Brooklyn Memory Walk, giving fans and members of the Brooklyn community the opportunity to walk for loved ones suffering from Alzheimer's. This pre-game event had over two hundred participants in the one mile walk around the ball-park's warning track, and raised over \$30,000 for the Alzheimer's Association.

**Baseball Clinics:** Each season, Cyclones players run instructional baseball clinics for children in local areas of Brooklyn. These clinics provide the opportunity for children of all ages to learn the fundamentals of baseball from professional baseball players. The clinics also gave the Cyclones a chance to reach out to communities that do not normally get the chance to play baseball, or attend games.

**Batter Up:** The Batter Up program was designed as an incentive program for children in local schools. Kids who demonstrate the most improvement over the course of a semester are rewarded with items from the Cyclones, including game tickets and pre-game recognition on the field.



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## IN THE COMMUNITY

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**Blood Drive:** Each season, the Cyclones and New York Blood Services team up and conduct three blood drives at KeySpan Park. Each person who donates blood receives tickets to a game during the season.

**Celebrity/Charity Softball Game:** The Cyclones, in conjunction with Brooklyn's High School of Sports Management, host this annual event, in which members of the Cyclones' front office staff team up with students to give the kids hands-on experience on all aspects of the event's planning including: ticket sales, sponsorship sales, and media relations. This annual event has raised nearly \$30,000 for the HSSM in its three-year history.

**Coat Drive:** Each season, the Cyclones collect coats on the ballpark's Concourse Level, allowing fans to donate gently used coats, which are donated to the local Reaching Out Community Services, and then redistributed to those in need in the community.

**Community Holiday Party:** During each holiday season, the Cyclones host a free community holiday party for local children. The children in attendance enjoy food, video games, activities, a Cyclones gift bag, and a visit from Santa Claus.

**Cyclones Book Patrol:** The Book Patrol was developed to generate kids' interest in reading. In the off season, front office staff members visit local schools and libraries throughout New York City to read baseball-themed stories to children and teach lessons about the importance of education. During the season, players read to kids in the Brooklyn Baseball Gallery prior to Sunday home games.

**Cyclones School Fundraising Program:** The Cyclones School Fundraising Program was designed to help raise much-needed funds for individual schools and youth sports teams throughout Brooklyn. The schools and organizations sold Brooklyn Cyclones ticket vouchers and received \$3.00 for each voucher sold. An incentive program was implemented for the children to earn prizes, such as Cyclones tickets, autographed items, and even a classroom visit from Cyclones players. Since the program's inception in 2006, 30 NYC public schools have participated and raised a total of \$16,000 for their teams and organizations.

**Cyclones Sport Leader Awards:** In 2009, 25 students from schools throughout Brooklyn and Queens received a United States Savings Bond and Brooklyn Cyclones tickets for having outstanding academic, athletic, and leadership skills. Each school chose its award recipient from the graduating class of students. The 25 students awarded the honor of "Cyclones Sport Leader" ranged from elementary school to high school. Since 2004, the Cyclones have distributed nearly \$10,000 in scholarships to over 150 students.



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## IN THE COMMUNITY

*(cont'd)*

**Diamond Dreams:** Diamond Dreams, an educational tour, was designed for students to use baseball as a learning tool and the ballpark as an interactive classroom. The educational stadium tour takes classes into the locker rooms, onto the field, and behind the scenes to provide students ages 7-13 with invaluable lessons in mathematics, history, geography, and life skills. The Cyclones have had visits from approximately 150 different schools, allowing over 7,500 kids to participate in the Diamond Dreams tour.

**Diamond Dreams Black History Month Contest:** The Baseball and Black History Month contest is an offshoot of the Diamond Dreams Program, in which students in grades 1-6 submit writing and art projects pertaining to the theme of Baseball and Black History. The winners of the contest receive game tickets and are honored in a pre-game, on-field ceremony on African American Heritage Night.

**High School of Sports Management:** The Cyclones, in conjunction with the NYC Department of Education, helped to develop a specialized sports management program for high school students. The Cyclones provide guidance regarding the sports management industry by introducing guest speakers, providing financial assistance, and giving students internship opportunities.

**Jerseys off the Back:** During the season, the Cyclones teamed up with a several organizations to raffle off game-worn "Jerseys off the back." The themed jerseys were auctioned off following games on Italian Night, Irish Night, and Breast Cancer Awareness Night, among others, and raised nearly \$15,000, which was donated to the Jackie Robinson Foundation, American Heart Association, Maimonides Medical Center, Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), and the Knights of Columbus.

**Neighborhood All-Star Team (NAT'S Kids):** NAT's Kids is a Police Athletic League Program of NYC that provides young people with the opportunity to reach their full potential through recreational, cultural, and educational activities. Over five hundred campers each year participate in summer programs at KeySpan Park. The Cyclones donated \$80,000 to help run the camp in 2009.

**Rock & Wrap It Up:** The Cyclones and the team's concessionaire, Aramark, teamed up with "Rock & Wrap It Up" to help fight hunger in the Brooklyn community. Following home games, the Aramark staff arranges to have concession food that was prepared, but not served, recovered and delivered to local food shelters. Within the past two seasons, the Cyclones donated nearly 2,000 lbs. of food.



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*(cont'd)*

**S.T.R.I.K.E (Striving To Restore and Improve Kids Equipment):** The S.T.R.I.K.E program helps to equip local youth league teams, and has provided gloves, uniforms, baseballs, scorebooks, and more -- over \$20,000 of equipment and uniforms to needy youth league teams in New York City.

**Take Your Base - 5K Run/Walk against Cancer:** In 2009, the Cyclones teamed up the American Cancer Society for the 5th annual "Take Your Base - 5K Run/Walk against Cancer." This major community event saw over 250 participants and raised more than \$28,000 for the American Cancer Society. The event has raised \$98,000 in its brief five-year history.

**Ticket Donations:** The Cyclones work with various organizations by donating tickets to games. Nearly 8,000 tickets were donated in 2009 to groups in the area. The donated tickets were either used by the group members to attend a game together, or used for fundraising purposes at organizational functions and raffles. ■



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## FINANCIAL SUCCESS & STABILITY

The Brooklyn Cyclones have drawn over 2.5 million fans to KeySpan park in the team's nine seasons, setting various attendance records along the way. That popularity at the turnstiles has helped the team become among the most financially successful and stable in all of the minor leagues, and in the process, the Cyclones have become the Short-Season classification's flagship franchise.

Brooklyn is the only Short-Season team ever to draw over 300,000 fans in a single season, and to rank in MiLB's top 10 in average attendance, accomplishing both feats twice. The Cyclones have never ranked outside of MiLB's top 17 in that category. KeySpan Park has been filled to 105% capacity for Cyclones games over the team's first nine seasons, with Brooklyn averaging 7,878 fans over that time period. The Cyclones have recorded 248 sellouts in 331 games, including a string of 113 consecutive sellouts from 2001-2004.

- **2001:** 289,381 Total Attendance (7,821 per game); *12th in MiLB in average attendance*
- **2002:** 317,124 Total Attendance (8,345 per game); *9th in MiLB in average attendance*
- **2003:** 307,383 Total Attendance (8,308 per game); *10th in MiLB in average attendance*
- **2004:** 294,229 Total Attendance (7,952 per game); *14th in MiLB in average attendance*
- **2005:** 285,818 Total Attendance (7,939 per game); *12th in MiLB in average attendance*
- **2006:** 289,323 Total Attendance (7,820 per game); *15th in MiLB in average attendance*
- **2007:** 294,972 Total Attendance (8,194 per game); *16th in MiLB in average attendance*
- **2008:** 265,220 Total Attendance (7,367 per game); *17th in MiLB in average attendance*
- **2009:** 264,102 Total Attendance (7,138 per game); *16th in MiLB in average attendance*

The Cyclones were the only Short-Season team to average over 7,000 fans per game in 2009, and the only team in the classification to rank inside MiLB's top 20 (16th).

As noted in the MiLB Standard Financial Report (through 2008), the Cyclones have ranked **first** among all Short-Season teams in the following categories:

- Ticket Revenue
- Gross Ticket Revenue
- Net Ticket Revenue
- Advertising Revenue
- Total Revenue
- Net Income

Impressively, this year, in the team's ninth season, the Cyclones' food, beverage and merchandise per cap was over \$11. ■





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## PUBLICITY & PROMOTION

Throughout the Brooklyn Cyclones' nine-year history, the team has received unparalleled media attention, resulting in the worldwide prominence of not only the Cyclones' brand, but the Minor League baseball brand, as well.

From baseball's return to Brooklyn in 2001 through 2009's "Baracklyn Cyclones" and "Bellies & Baseball" promotions, there is perhaps no other minor league team that has received the consistent national media exposure that the Cyclones have achieved.

The Cyclones' appeal reaches beyond the sports pages, as well, bringing Brooklyn baseball -- and Minor league Baseball -- to a new and diverse audience every year. Below is a list of just some of the media outlets that have covered or featured the Cyclones:

### PRINT

*Sports Illustrated • ESPN The Magazine • GQ • Maxim • FHM • US News & World Report • Harper's Bazaar • USA Today • The New York Times • Wall Street Journal • Los Angeles Times • Chicago Tribune • The Arizona Republic • Dallas Morning News • The Boston Globe • San Francisco Chronicle • The Kansas City Star • Orlando Sentinel • New York Daily • New York Post • Newsday*

### TELEVISION

*ESPN - SportsCenter, E:60, The Block, etc. • Good Morning America (ABC) • Saturday Night Live (NBC) • King of Queens (CBS) • Everwood (WB11) • ABC • CBS • NBC • FOX • WB11*

### RADIO

*660 WFAN • 1010 WINS • CBS 880 • ESPN Radio • Radio Disney • Z100 • WPLJ • Hot 97*

### INTERNET

The Cyclones' Internet presence has given the team an even broader reach. In 2009 alone, the team's official website, [brooklyncyclones.com](http://brooklyncyclones.com), received over 300,000 unique visitors and 48 million hits. The Cyclones have been a pioneer in online social media, as well. The team's Facebook page has over 5,400 fans, and the Cyclones' Twitter page has over 2,300 followers. The team's official blog has received over 20,000 visitors since April of 2009, and there are approximately 30,000 recipients of the team's online newsletter. ■



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## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

The Brooklyn Cyclones have been honored with numerous awards and recognition throughout the team's history. The organization -- and its front office staff and on-field personnel, as individuals -- have been recognized in a variety of areas, including:

- 2001 NYPL Leo Pinckney Promotional Award
- 2001 NYPL Executive of the Year, Vice President RC Reutemann
- 2001 NYPL Groundskeeper of the Year, Mike Procops
- 2001 Beam-Clay Award, Best Professional League Field
- 2001 NYPL Manager of the Year, Edgar Alfonzo
- 2001 *Baseball America* Short-Season Manager of the Year, Edgar Alfonzo
- 2001 NYPL Co-Champions
- 2001 McNamara Division Champions
- 2003 *Baseball America* Best Short-Season Ballpark
- 2003 Vincent McNamara Award, NYPL's Outstanding Club
- 2003 McNamara Division Champions
- 2004 NYPL Stedler Award, OF Ambiorix Concepcion
- 2004 McNamara Division Champions
- 2005 Bob Freitas Award, Outstanding Minor League Operation
- 2005 NYPL Groundskeeper of the Year, Kevin Ponte
- 2007 NYPL Executive of the Year, General Manager Steve Cohen
- 2007 McNamara Division Champions
- 2008 NYPL Hon. Robert F. Julian Community & Baseball Service Award, Steve Cohen
- 2008 *ESPN The Magazine* Veekie Award, Top Minor League Promotion
- 2009 Vincent McNamara Award, NYPL's Outstanding Club

In 2005, Brooklyn was also chosen to host to the New York-Penn League's first-ever All-Star Game -- the borough's first professional ASG since 1949. ■