



MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL INTERNATIONAL
NEWS RELEASE
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**MLB INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JAPAN-AMERICAN SOCIETIES
PARTNER TO PROVIDE ARIZONA YOUTH A TASTE OF JAPAN**

Major League Baseball International (MLBI) and the National Association of Japan-American Societies (NAJAS) will sponsor 12 Phoenix-area baseball players, ages 13-15, on a trip to Tokyo this summer as part of a continuing exchange program established by NAJAS.

The American players will arrive in Tokyo on July 13. The following day, the American youngsters will join Japanese boys from the Hongo Middle School for a clinic with players and coaches from the Chiba Lotte Marines of Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB). The clinic will be led by Marines manager and former New York Mets and Texas Rangers manager Bobby Valentine. Both teams also will have the opportunity to meet and greet Yomiuri Giants players and get a clubhouse tour prior to the Giants-Yokohama Bay Stars game on July 15. After their four day stay in Tokyo, the players will travel to the Northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, where they will live with Japanese host families and train for 10 days.

In addition to the baseball, the players will have time to tour Tokyo, visiting the famous Tsukiji fish market, the temple at Asakusa and the Saitama Sakae Sumo club, where they will receive instruction on the fine art of sumo. They also will have lunch at the home of the United States Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer. The Ambassador is the former President of the Texas Rangers.

"Baseball, rich in the history of the US-Japan relationship, provides an excellent platform for teenagers from the two countries to learn about another culture," said Jim Small, Vice President, International Market Development for Major League Baseball. "We are pleased to be a part of this 'once in a lifetime' experience for these kids."

"The National Association of Japan-American Societies welcomes the opportunity to work with Major League Baseball Japan in this exciting youth baseball camp," said NAJAS Chairman William R. Farrell. "This is an excellent opportunity to combine sports education and cross cultural opportunities for young men from the United States and Japan."

In recognition of the 150th anniversary of US-Japan relations in 2004, NAJAS worked in cooperation with the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Hokkaido Nippon Ham Fighters to provide Japanese boys from Hokkaido an opportunity to attend a two-week camp in Phoenix, AZ to train with American baseball players ages 13-15.

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