

Childs Play, *continued from page 6*

Dr. Boman

ment for Leadership Through Athletics, "isn't boring."

No, it isn't. In fact, it would be difficult to find a facility like this one that wasn't part of a large organization, such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs or Police Athletic League. If there's a similar building and program in the Baltimore area, the Grades aren't aware of it.

What they, along with co-founder Kent Politsch, are aware of, is the crying need for facilities and programs like this in the area. Clearly the community agrees, with an ever growing list of donors and volunteers, including everything from large corporate donations of cash and in-kind services to middle- and high-schoolers who work at the gym to earn community service hours.

Even while the paint is still drying in some parts of the building, the group has plans to do even more. Led by a Board of Directors that includes some high profile community members, including representatives St. Agnes healthcare, MBNA, UMBC, Mount de Sales Academy and the state legislature, Leadership Through Athletics is simultaneously working to retire the debt undertaken to build the facility, fund operating expenses, expand existing programs, add new programs and look to the future.

"We're not going to stop where we are," said Patrick. "In seven to 10 years, we'd like to have our own baseball and soccer fields."

For Patrick, the fire in his belly to do something for others came when he was doing his internship for UPS. As part of the program, the company flew him to Chicago, where he worked in a food kitchen, a juvenile detention facility and a women's shelter. It opened his eyes.

Today, he and the rest of the volunteers are trying to help kids avoid some of the difficult times he saw. What they need is more volunteers, more financial and in-kind donations, more folks who want to rent parts of the gym for birthday parties or athletic programs, and more kids and parents who want to participate.

Mostly, said Metzger, who spends his days seeking donations, grants and sponsors, "we want people to come and see what it's all about. Because once they see it, they'll be excited about it."

For more information, call the facility at 410-737-2117, or visit www.leadershipthroughathletics.org.



Animal Advocates