



Cardboard to Leather™ or C2L™ (as it is affectionately called) is one of the Oriole Advocates' major projects where “gently” used and new baseball and softball equipment is collected and sent, to underprivileged youth in developing countries including Afghanistan, Aruba, Belgrade, Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Iraq, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

HISTORY

The Cardboard to Leather™ program was inspired by an article written by Baltimore Sun sportswriter John Eisenberg in 1992. Eisenberg traveled to the Dominican Republic on an unrelated assignment, and while there, observed children playing baseball with makeshift equipment: tree limbs for bats, balls of string or tape for balls and cardboard wrapped with tape for gloves. He subsequently wrote about what he had observed, and after reading the article, the Oriole Advocates decided to develop a program to get decent equipment to the children.

Since the program's inception, the Oriole Advocates have shipped over 50 tons of equipment.



2007's shipment to Nicaragua brought smiles to the faces of the children who received new uniforms.

A young Orioles fan joins in the spirit of giving on C2L™ day!



Uniforms, bats, gloves, helmets, catcher's equipment, baseballs and more received through donations from little leagues, schools, recreation departments, individual donations as well as collections

at Camden Yards and local minor league stadiums are accepted throughout the year. The gear is then packed by the Advocates and shipped to little leagues, schools and community groups who conduct baseball and softball programs in the respective countries.

Financial donations made to the Oriole Advocates Charitable Foundation help defray the costs of storage and shipment of the collected equipment. The Advocates hold an annual raffle along with silent auctions throughout the year to help raise the funds needed for storage and shipment. Additionally, for the last several years, the Oriole Advocates' C2L™ program has received support from Major League Baseball's “Baseball Tomorrow” program.

In 2008, Oriole Third Baseman, Melvin Mora served as spokesperson for Cardboard to Leather™. The Oriole Advocates in conjunction with the Melvin Mora Foundation, shipped thousands of pieces of equipment to Venezuela including gloves, bats, baseball, softballs, helmets, catcher's masks, uniform jerseys and more!



Members of the Oriole Advocates and Legg Mason staff man the gates on Cardboard to Leather™ collection day at Camden Yards.



From left - Orioles Third Baseman, Melvin Mora, Legg Mason Senior Vice President, Tim Munoz, C2L™ Co-Chairs, Bob Harden and Kevin Joyce along with the Oriole Bird, join in an on-field check presentation from Legg Mason to the Cardboard to Leather™ program.

SPONSORS & PARTNERS

In summer 2008, C2L™ welcomed Legg Mason as a sponsor. This fine corporation provided the C2L™ program with a generous grant that will go a long way toward helping ship the donated equipment to deserving children. Additionally, Legg Mason has collected C2L™ donations from its workforce and Legg Mason personnel helped the Advocates with their C2L™ collection at Camden Yards in July of '08, which turned out to be one of the most successful collections ever!



C2L™ has also developed some important partnerships during the last few years. Included among these are:

- Runners Inc. provides a large storage area at a discounted rate for the large inventory of equipment.
- Freestate Challenge Academy, whose young men and women assist each year with inventorying and packing the equipment for shipment.
- Two local Sandlot baseball and softball training facilities (one in Glen Burnie and one in Forest Hill), hold regular equipment collections.
- Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville Campus, which holds collections throughout the year and also donates its used equipment on a yearly basis.