



# OAKLAND ATHLETICS

## Media Release

Oakland Athletics Baseball Company • 7000 Coliseum Way • Oakland, CA 94621  
510-638-4900 • Public Relations Facsimile 510-562-1633 • [www.oaklandathletics.com](http://www.oaklandathletics.com)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 12, 2010

### Bay Area Students Participate in A's "Breaking Barriers" Essay Contest

*Elementary, Middle School Students & Teachers to Attend Jackie Robinson Day April 15*

OAKLAND, Calif. – Nearly 500 Bay Area elementary and middle school students, teachers and parents will attend the Athletics-Orioles game Thursday night, April 15 at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum as guests of the A's for their recent participation in the Jackie Robinson "Breaking Barriers Essay Contest," which is co-sponsored by Major League Baseball.

On April 15, every home team in Major League Baseball will officially pay tribute to Robinson—who broke the color barrier by becoming the first African American ever to play in the big leagues in 1947—by every player on both teams wearing No. 42 on their game jerseys.

Beyond the prizes awarded for the contest's national winners by MLB, the A's offered additional encouragement to Bay Area students by providing every participant two complimentary tickets to Jackie Robinson Day April 15 at the Coliseum when the A's host the Baltimore Orioles at 7:05 p.m. More than 500 students, teachers and parents from schools in Castro Valley, Pleasanton, Pittsburg, Richmond, San Pablo, Antioch, Fremont, St. Helena and San Jose benefitted from the A's program.

"Jackie Robinson's life struggle and remarkable accomplishments is a very inspirational story," said Detra Paige, the Athletics' director of community relations. "The A's believe every young person in the Bay Area should be exposed and understand the important role that Jackie played in the history of baseball, as well as the history of American civil rights. His story is as pertinent today as it was when he broke into the major leagues in 1947."

The schools involved in the essay contest included:

- Proctor Elementary School, Castro Valley
- Rancho Medanos Junior High School, Pittsburg
- Valley View Elementary School, Richmond
- Tara Hills School, San Pablo
- Carmen Dragon Elementary School, Antioch
- Stoneman Elementary School, Pittsburg
- Mission San Jose Elementary School, Fremont
- St. Helena Catholic School, St. Helena
- Lydiksen Elementary School, Pleasanton
- James McEntee Academy, San Jose

**Contacts:** Bob Rose, Director of Public Relations  
(510) 563-2380, [brose@oaklandathletics.com](mailto:brose@oaklandathletics.com)

Kristy Fick, Manager of Player and Media Relations  
(510) 563-2236, [kfick@oaklandathletics.com](mailto:kfick@oaklandathletics.com)

(Essay excerpts to follow)

## EXCERPTS FROM STUDENT ESSAYS

*“Thank you for providing this wonderful opportunity for my students. Our class had a fantastic discussion about barriers and what it means to break them. It was fun sharing the life and accomplishments of Jackie Robinson with my students.”*  
**--Eric Schuh, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Lydiksen Elementary School (Pleasanton, CA)**

*“Jackie Robinson shared that the white baseball players used to spit on him, and mistreat him in other ways, but his courage allowed him to stick it out and make a difference in the lives of everyone. Jackie Robinson had a choice to sink or swim and I’m glad he chose to swim.”* --**Darren Wusstig, 8<sup>th</sup> grader, Rancho Medanos Junior High School (Pittsburg, CA)**

*“I can really appreciate Jackie Robinson because I realize that he was a good model for us to follow, and because I had the courage to use values such as persistence and determination, I was also able to break through my barrier. I have been sticking to my values and I know that I can now proceed with doing what’s right.”* --**Rosario Abonce, 8<sup>th</sup> grader, Rancho Medanos Junior High School (Pittsburg, CA)**

*“When Jackie started high school, he tried out for the football team. The assistant coach saw Jackie looking at the sign up sheet and said, ‘You’re not going to make it, you’re black. Jackie was furious. He put his name on the sheet and said, ‘you watch.’”*—**Ondray Cooper, 5<sup>th</sup> grader, Proctor Elementary School (Castro Valley, CA)**

*“Jackie Robinson broke a barrier. He joined the baseball team even though he was black. At that time, black people could not do everything like white people. Blacks had different water fountains than whites. They had different seats on the bus than whites.”*—**David Chen, 5<sup>th</sup> grader, Proctor Elementary School (Castro Valley, CA)**

*“Jackie Robinson is a great role model for me because he made baseball fair for everyone and he helped African Americans become equal and productive citizens. I can now play in the major leagues if I decide to ...because Jackie Robinson led the way.”*—**Joshua D. Harris, 4<sup>th</sup> grader, Valley View Elementary School (Richmond, CA)**

*“I overcame that barrier by using these two values that Jackie Robinson used to break his barrier. Jackie’s and my barriers are almost alike because we both wanted to play a sport and we couldn’t. I couldn’t because I was a girl and white and tiny, and he was a black man. But that doesn’t matter, because black and white people, and girls and boys, should play sports together if they want to.”*  
**--Monica Martinez, 4<sup>th</sup> grader, Tara Hills Elementary School (San Pablo, CA)**

*“Another one of Jackie’s nine values that helped me overcome my fear was courage. Courage is when you do something that is right, even though it’s hard to do.”*—**Drake Vidkjer, 8<sup>th</sup> grader, St. Helena Catholic School (St. Helena, CA)**

*“I think Jackie Robinson was a good man. Even though he suffered from people talking about him and teasing him, he never gave up on his dream to be a Major League baseball player. It doesn’t really matter what color you are, it only matters about your personality and ability. I am glad he pursued his dream and became a pioneer so other African Americans and people of color could play in the major leagues.”*—**Jhenalyn Bambao, 4<sup>th</sup> grader, Stoneman Elementary School (Pittsburg, CA)**

*“I don’t care what anybody says about me. I am going to follow my dreams just like Jackie. He suffered a lot, but he never gave up.”*—**Celena Esperza, 4<sup>th</sup> grader, Stoneman Elementary School (Pittsburg, CA)**

*“Jackie Robinson was very smart and knew that he would play even though the people were cruel. He wanted to prove that people of color could play professional ball. He succeeded and there are many people of color in all professional sports. I live on a street where my friends are all different colors. We play sports together and have fun. I know that Jackie helped us see that we’re all just the same.”*  
**—Angela Garcia, 4<sup>th</sup> grader, Stoneman Elementary School (Pittsburg, CA)**

*“Jackie also inspires me because he was the first African American ballplayer in the Major Leagues. Maybe I will be a first in something one day.”*—**Dylan Bunag, 4<sup>th</sup> grader, Stoneman Elementary School (Pittsburg, CA)**

