

Spectrum

Musician makes miracles

Charmain Z. Brackett
Correspondent

It's been called a field of dreams. It's a place where children of all abilities can play baseball.

And within the next year, the Family Y will have its own specialized field for the Miracle League.

Millie Schumacher, the Family Y's community relations director, calls the field the legacy of the Y's sesquicentennial year.

On Sunday, about 4,000 people attended the Amy Grant concert to raise money for the field. The field alone will cost \$225,000, according to Danny McConnell, president and chief executive officer of the Family Y, a partnership between the YMCA and YWCA in Augusta. Additional funds must be raised to complete the project.

"There's not one within a two hour distance from here," said McConnell.

The field is made of a special rubber which provides an even surface for children in wheelchairs or those who must walk with a walker or braces. Volunteers serve as buddies to help the players round the bases.

There are no outs in this game, and every player gets to hit and score.

Grant, who sang some of her popular songs including Baby, Baby; I Will Remember You; Thy Word; Takes a Little Time and Lucky One, donated some of the proceeds from sales of her CDs, T-shirts and books to the cause and gave a volunteer money to purchase bricks in the name of her husband, Vince Gill, and her.

The bricks will form a walkway to the field.

During her set, Grant brought up the children who will be part of the first Miracle League team; they played percussion instruments and swayed as she sang.

The YMCA has been in Augusta for 150 years. Part of its mission includes the Armed Forces Y on Tobacco Road.

Schumacher said there are many special needs children who are part of military Families who participate in the Y's activities for that targeted population. Other special programs include adaptive aquatics and adapted aerobics classes.

McConnell said the goal of the concert was to raise about \$100,000 for the project. Brick sales will also help raise funds.



Photo by Charmain Z. Brackett



Photos by Bonnie Heater

(Above) Jeannie Montgomery, an anchor/reporter from WJBF News Channel 6 in Augusta, announces with Danny McConnell, Family Y of Augusta chief executive officer and president, the winner of the golf cart, David Job, during the Miracle Concert held Oct. 12 at the First Tee of Augusta. (Right) Augusta born singer/song writer Amy Grant performs at 4 p.m. during the Miracle Concert; later that same evening she performed in Nashville, Tenn.



(Above) Ciera Baker, the daughter of Ashley and Chris Baker of Augusta, enjoys the Razor Scooter she was awarded as the third place winner in the pictorial contest sponsored by Georgia Bank and Trust and the Family Y at the Miracle Concert. (Right) Pfc. Nathaniel King, a Soldier assigned to Company B, 73rd Ordnance Battalion, helps Matt Miklas, a member of the first Miracle League baseball team of Augusta, up the hill to the concert site. About 60 Soldiers volunteered from Companies B and C, 73rd Ordnance Battalion from Fort Gordon, in setting up the stage Oct. 11. They also helped the Richmond County Sheriff's office with parking at three parking sites, security and tearing down the stage at the end of the concert Oct. 12, according to 1st Sgt. Fred Murry of Company B, 73rd Ordnance Battalion. Millie Schumacher, the Family Y community relations director, said, "We could not have done this (Miracle Concert) without the Soldiers' help." Gates opened at 2 p.m. Fort Gordon's Signal Corps Jazz Band performed at that time. Individuals interested in dedicating a commemorative brick in someone's honor or memory can do so by stopping at any area Family Y. Cost is \$100 per brick. The bricks will be laid in the walkway around the Miracle League Field. All proceeds from the commemorative brick sale will help build the Miracle League baseball field, a specially designed field for disabled children and young adults, at the Wilson Family Y on Wheeler Road in Augusta.

