

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Leveling the Playing Field
410-204-4814
comms@levelingtheplyingfield.org

Leveling the Playing Field Partners with RIP-IT Sports to Increase Access to Softball for Young Women and Girls

RIP-IT Sports' donation of women's protective gear, footwear, and apparel will help remove the equipment barrier for young athletes hoping to play softball

Washington, D.C. (July 29, 2024) - Leveling the Playing Field (LPF) has announced a new partnership with RIP-IT Sports bringing an influx of softball equipment to LPF warehouses. The equipment worth over \$56k – all designed to fit the unique need of female athletes – includes hundreds of protective softball fielder masks, gloves, and softball pants, all of which are critical pieces for softball participation at all ages.

According to the Women's Sports Foundation 2022 report, "Fifty Years of Title IX: We're Not Done Yet," girls today still have fewer high school participation opportunities than boys did when the landmark Title IX legislation was passed in 1972. In addition, access to sports participation opportunities disproportionately impacts girls and women of color, those with disabilities and LGBTQ+ athletes. This donation by RIP-IT Sports further affirms both organizations' commitment to women's sports and accessibility to necessary equipment, with RIP-IT's products all developed and designed exclusively for female athletes, who may drop out of sports entirely without the correct equipment due to poor fit or high costs. LPF's ability to provide free sports equipment lowers the barrier to entry for girls in under-resourced communities who drop out of sports entirely. Together, LPF and RIP-IT hope to help narrow the gap in participation in sports which gets steeper as girls enter high school.

"LPF could not be more excited to officially partner with RIP-IT to expand access for local girls in need to get on the field," says LPF Chief Operating Officer Kaitlin Brennan. "It has been well documented that girls are twice as likely to drop out of youth sports by the age of 14 as boys. This partnership with RIP-IT will help Leveling the Playing Field to keep youth sports accessible and exciting for local girls through providing high-quality equipment specifically designed for female athletes."

"All RIP-IT gear and apparel is designed for the unique needs of female athletes, with the ultimate goal that we break down the barriers to participation so that girls of any age and skill level can confidently thrive on and off the playing field," says Janelle Anderson, CEO of RIP-IT Sports. "Together with Leveling the Playing Field, RIP-IT is committed to making the joy and long-term benefits of sports more accessible to every girl, everywhere."

Items donated from RIP-IT will be available to approved youth programs and coaches free of charge at all five LPF warehouses via appointment. For more information on Leveling the Playing Field, visit LPFSports.org or contact info@levelingtheplyingfield.org.

About Leveling the Playing Field: Leveling the Playing Field is a non-profit organization which collects and re-distributes sports equipment to under-resourced communities. The organization

currently operates in five cities: Greater Washington D.C., Baltimore, MD, Philadelphia, PA, Buffalo, NY, and Columbus, OH. Leveling the Playing has donated over \$14 million in sports equipment to schools, youth teams and leagues, and other non-profit organizations since 2013.

About RIP-IT: RIP-IT Sports is dedicated to a single, impactful mission: enhancing female athletic performance. Since its founding in 1999, RIP-IT Sports has been investing in research and technology to design and produce innovative gear and apparel designed exclusively for the unique needs of female athletes in the sports of softball, volleyball, soccer and athletic training. With a commitment to flawless fit and optimal performance, RIP-IT products can be found in sporting goods stores nationwide and online at www.ripit.com