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## **FACTS ON THE ACE HARDWARE/LITTLE LEAGUE “FIELDS FOR THE FUTURE” CONTEST**

**Overview:** To uphold Ace Hardware’s helpful pledge to the communities and customers that Ace stores serve, the hardware cooperative teamed up with Little League® Baseball, Ace retailers and local volunteers to “pitch in” and fix up Little League fields “in need” throughout the United States through the Ace Hardware/Little League “Fields For The Future” Contest. A total of five fields were selected as regional grand prize winners (one winner per the following official Little League divisions: Central, East, South, Southwest and West).

**Nominations:** In October 2004, Ace retailers were asked to nominate, in a short essay, a Little League field in their own communities that significantly requires some do-it-yourself “TLC” rehab work. Some 40 Ace retailers submitted extensive, heart-warming entries describing the importance the field holds and why the location they nominated should receive a makeover from Ace and continue to serve future ballplayers.

**Prizes:** In December 2004, five fields were selected by Ace to receive \$2,500 worth of Ace Hardware products and a full day’s work to help beautify and repair the field from Ace’s “Helpful Hardware Man” Lou Manfredini and his “Lou Crew” of volunteers comprised of local Little League parents, players, officials, community members and local Ace store volunteers. In addition, winning leagues also receive a \$2,500 donation of Ace Gift cards for league use. The five winning fields will receive their makeovers throughout spring 2005.

**Lou Crew:** Led by Lou Manfredini, who offers his personable, helpful home improvement advice to homeowners across the country via his books, media interviews and as Ace Hardware’s “Helpful Hardware Man,” the “Lou Crew,” consisting of the nominating Ace retailer and a group of local volunteers, will work to repair the baseball fields.

**Judging:** Entries were judged by Ace Hardware representatives based on the emotional significance of the essay, and the field’s use by and contribution to the community.

**Winners:** The following five “Fields for the Future” were selected:

Central Region

- **Challenger Division, Appleton, Wis.:** A field that is used by the disabled community was never completed due to budgetary concerns. Planned improvements include adding awnings and a paved walkway to and around the field for improved access.

Sponsored by Ace Hardware of Appleton

Southwest Region

- **Pine Bluff American/Eastern Little League Softball, Pine Bluff, Ark.:** The Pine Bluff American/Eastern Little League Softball organization started a girls softball program two years ago and asked to use an abandoned field not used for seven years. Although the field did receive some improvements since the girls league began, league officials are looking for Ace’s help to restore it to its old glory.

Sponsored by Terry’s Ace Hardware of Pine Bluff

Southern Region

- **Pine Castle Little League, Orlando, Fla.:** Three hurricanes that hit Orlando last summer left this local Little League field with extensive damage. Ace volunteers will fix damaged dugout roofs and repair score booths at the field.

Sponsored by Orlando Ace Hardware

Eastern Region

- **Rocky Hill Little League, Rocky Hill, Conn.:** Ace volunteers will help re-grade, excavate and seed this field that sits on the Veteran Administration property in this community. Repairs to fencing and dugout areas will further beautify this field. In addition, renovations will

bring added enjoyment to the many local vets who come to watch the Little League games at the field.

Sponsored by Katz Ace Hardware of Rocky Hill

Western Region

- **Rio Salado Little League, Tempe, Ariz.:** The infield at Escalante ball field is so hard it is dubbed “the parking lot” and Little Leaguers refuse to slide even when instructed to. Ace volunteers will help improve both the field and the dugout areas for the 150 children who play there each year.

Sponsored by Paul’s Ace Hardware of Rio Salado

Ace Hardware Corp. is the largest retailer-owned cooperative in the industry. Ace’s annual retail sales from its more than 4,800 hardware, home center and lumber and building materials retailers top \$13 billion. Headquartered in Oak Brook, Ill., Ace currently operates 15 distribution centers in the United States and has stores located in all 50 states and 70 countries. More information on Ace can be found at [www.acehardware.com](http://www.acehardware.com).

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