

Vince Allaria is honored for 30 years of service to Little League Association

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – The **Edwardsville-Glen Carbon Little League Association** has provided youngsters from kindergarten to high school age the opportunity to play baseball since 1955.

For half of those 61 years, **Vince Allaria** has served the organization in many capacities, including volunteer coach, commissioner and board member.

Allaria was honored for 30 years of service to the EGCLLA at Leclaire Field in Edwardsville Saturday afternoon in a ceremony held prior to a game at the field, held in the 6-7th grade division between Ahmad and Rana Pediatrics and Laborers Local 397. A reception for him took place following the ceremony on the Leclaire Field grounds.

“I have a grandson who's 8; he's playing first-year pitching machine,” Allaria said. “Me and my son Mark coach his team.”

Baseball in the EGCLLA – much like the game in families throughout the area and the nation – has been passed down from generation to generation; fathers coached their children, with the children coaching their children and so on. “I grew up playing ball on this field,” Allaria said; “I lived three blocks from here when I was a kid and grew up in the Leclaire neighborhood and we spent a lot of time here playing ball.

“Edwardsville little league back then was the only organized sport in town; that was the first exposure I had to organized sports; it has a special place for me because of that.”

Baseball's roots run deep in the Edwardsville-Glen Carbon area, from the EGCLLA's teams all the way to the successful Edwardsville High School program; many of the players who have played on the great Tiger teams of the recent past, no doubt, got started playing baseball thanks to the efforts of Allaria and those who volunteered to run the programs and the teams.

“I'd like to think we've had a little bit of a part of the success they've had at the high school,” Allaria said. “We think we've developed a good program for kids to progress in and improve every year; I'd like to think we've had a little bit of a part in that.”

“Vince has been instrumental in the last 30 years in maintaining the organization,” said current EGCLLA commissioner **Paul Johnes**, “keeping it running at a high level. His leadership continues today; he's still on the board of directors, so his service to the community is really something special that the current board – all of us – felt to be recognized for 30 years of service. We're glad Vince is a part of our organization.

“With fields at four different locations in **Edwardsville and Glen Carbon**, the little league working with both the village (of Glen Carbon) and the city of Edwardsville to use those facilities, but Vince was instrumental for getting lights installed down in Glen Carbon and spearheading that effort; he was the catalyst behind that so we could have those games at night.”

“We've got a good future,” Allaria said of the organization's future. “We still have a lot of kids signing up to play every year, even with all the select teams that have formed over the years. We've still stayed plenty strong; we have 800-1,000 kids sign up every year, 60-70 teams from kindergarten through high school.”

