

## From Ex-Citadel Baseball Coach, A Fund-Raising App That Gives Back

By Jeff Hartsell



Summerville High School baseball player AC Heaton helps rebuild the gardens at Reeves Elementary School in Summerville. Provided

For high school coaches, fundraising is a job that never ends.

There's always a need for new equipment and uniforms, money for travel costs and facility upgrades.

But for his James Island High School team's latest effort, baseball coach Matt Spivey wanted something different than the usual crowdfunding apps now in vogue.

"Everybody is doing crowdfunding now," Spivey said. "But you hear all the time that the kids don't have to do anything to raise the money. And that's important for our kids, that it's not just 'Get a list of names and see if they will give us money.'"

Spivey found his solution in [mPower6](#), a youth-sports fundraising company founded by former Citadel baseball

assistant coach David Beckley. The system connects youth and high school sports fundraising efforts with charities or other worthy causes.

For example, a percentage of James Island baseball's fundraising effort goes to **Sara's Cure**, an organization dedicated to finding a cure for clear cell sarcoma, a rare form of cancer.



David Beckley

"Our effort is still ongoing," Spivey. "Our team goal is to raise \$5,000, and we're almost three-quarters of the way there. We're hoping to give back \$500 to \$1,000 of what we raise to Sara's Cure."

Sara's Cure was an obvious choice for Spivey. The effort is named for former James Island student Sara Woods, who was diagnosed with cancer almost three years ago. She was one of Spivey's students.

During a church mission trip to Guatemala, Woods started experiencing stomach pain that required emergency surgery in the foreign country. Doctors found a malignant tumor in her digestive tract. Eventually, her cancer was identified as clear cell sarcoma, a disease that does not typically respond to chemotherapy and radiation.

Donating to Sara's Cure reminds his players that they are part of something bigger than a baseball team, Spivey said. The Charleston Shockers travel softball team also used Beckley's company to raise money for their team and to donate to Sara's Cure.

"It's great that there is something bigger than our program attached to it," Spivey said. "That's where (Beckley) sold me, to be able to partner with somebody like that. And the parents like it, too, realizing that they are not just giving money to a baseball program."

Summerville baseball coach Bo Charpia and his Green Wave team had a similar experience. As part of their fundraising effort, Summerville players chose to volunteer with **The Charleston Miracle League**, which sponsors baseball games for kids and adults with mental and physical challenges.

He also runs a company called “E4Consulting” that helps high school players and teams navigate the intricacies of NCAA academic eligibility rules.

First Baptist football coach Johnny Waters, whose recent players include Clemson signee Michel Dukes, said Beckley’s expertise has been invaluable.

“It’s been very helpful for us,” said Waters. “We had three guys sign last year and should have six more sign next year, and he makes sure everybody is on line to be academically qualified as far as their test scores and course loads.

“He found something for us last year on a player who needed to take an extra course to be qualified that nobody knew about. He’s been great, and we hired him back again for this year. It’s a real benefit with all the rules the NCAA has now, and they are always changing. The last thing I want is for a kid to not have the opportunity at the next level because of something we didn’t know.”



Summerville High School baseball player Logan Palma (green hat) with young players at baseball camp. Provided

Green Wave players also volunteer time at Reeves Elementary School and were able to make a donation of about \$2,000 to **The Ark of SC**, which helps people with Alzheimer’s and other memory disorders.

Beckley, who spent 16 years as a Citadel assistant under head coach Fred Jordan, said the idea was to bring “ethics” back into the fundraising realm, which has changed much since the days of car washes and bake sales.

“It’s something that can allow our youth to get involved in something bigger than their sport,” said Beckley, who credits the company [Thaut Inc.](#) and Chris McNeil with helping to develop mPower6. “The current model is, ‘I play baseball for this team, we need a new batting cage, can we have some money?’

“I wanted to try to make them earn it or pay it forward through volunteer work with a charity or give a small percentage to a charity,” he said. “Hopefully, it teaches our youth a little bit about service to the community.

“The community is the one who supports them in the fundraising, so it’s a way to give back to that community.”

Beckley, who graduated from The Citadel in 1996 as the career leader in hits and stolen bases in the Southern Conference, has become something of a sports entrepreneur since his Citadel coaching career ended in 2017.