

# BOUNDLESS FUN

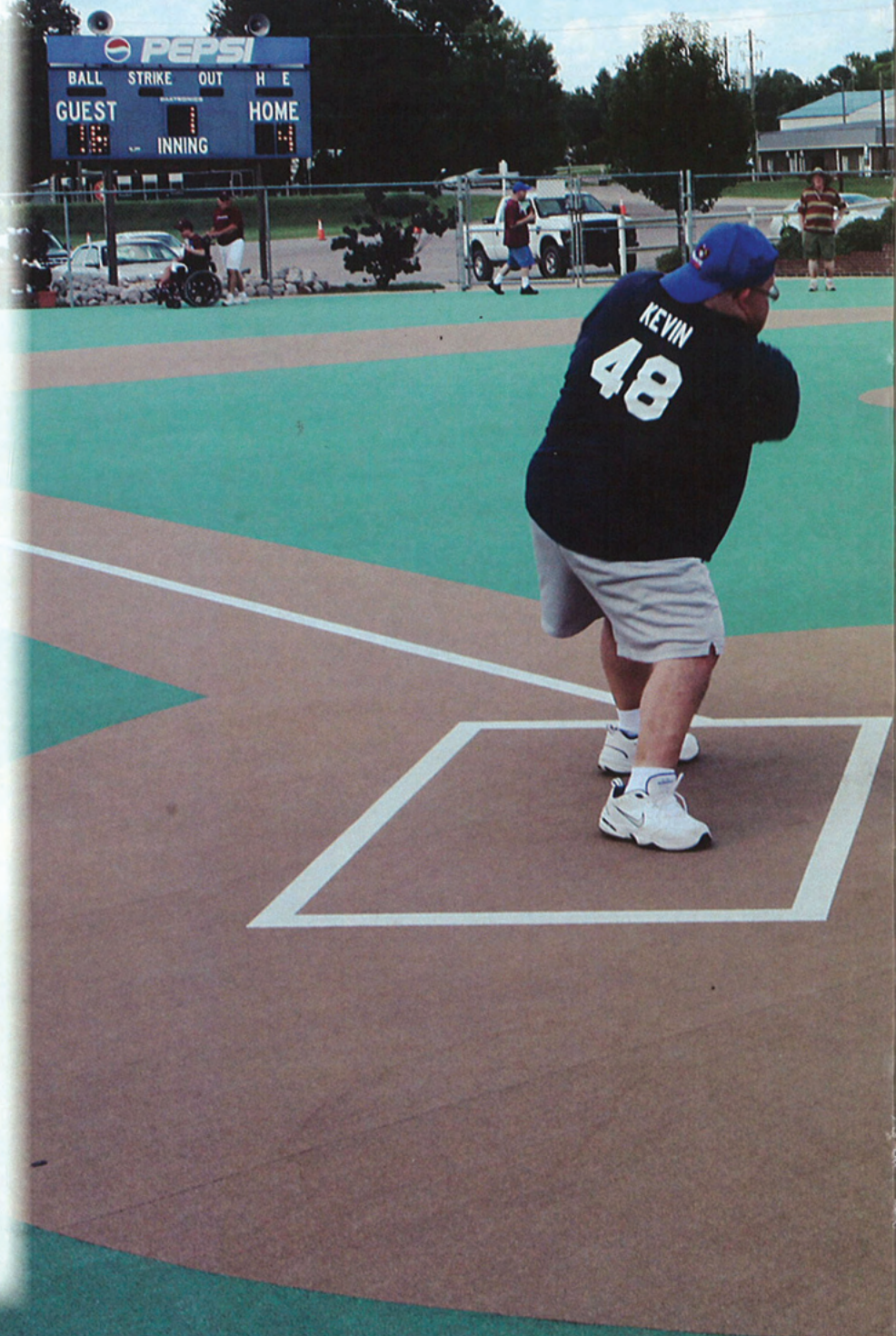
Moody's many recreational activities have a little something for everyone

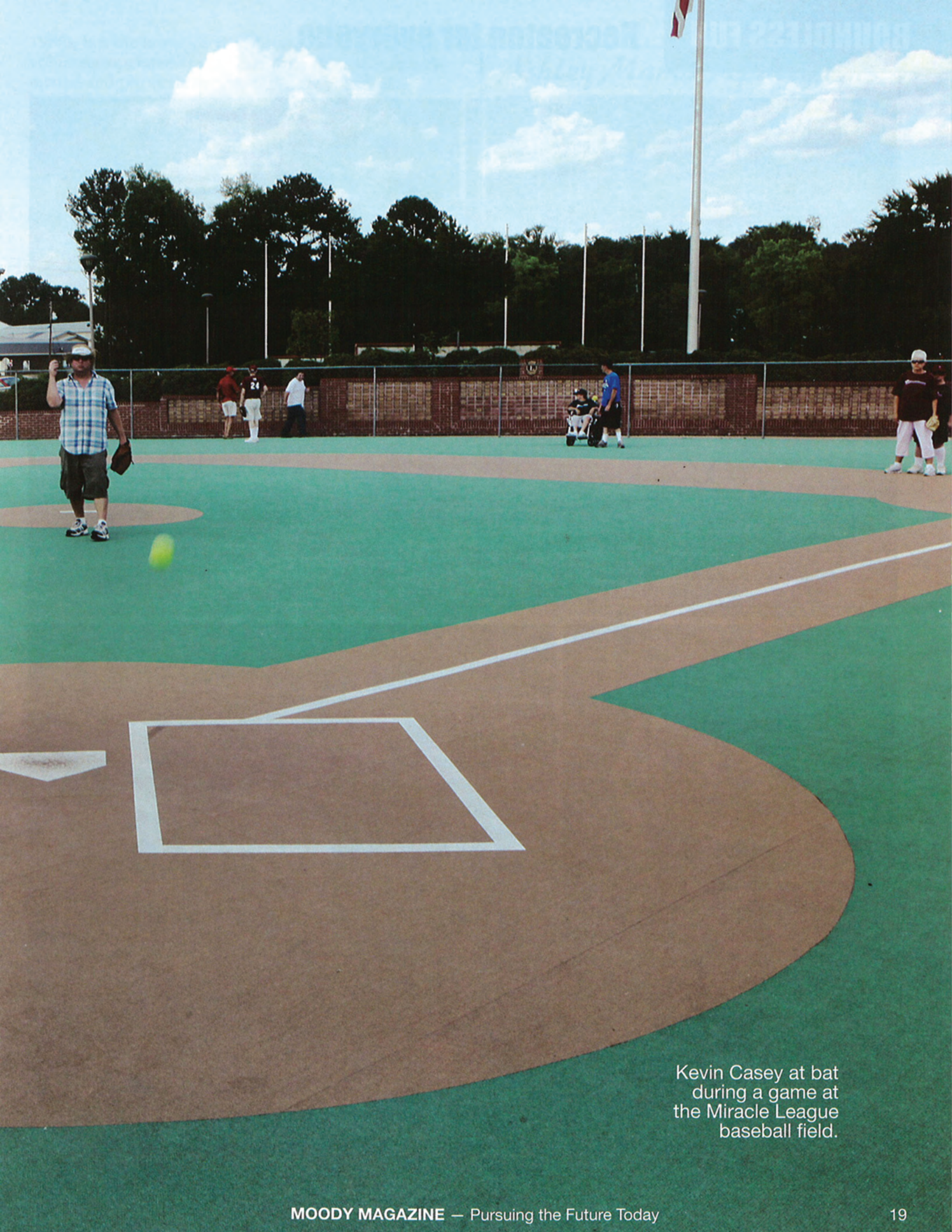
Story by Loyd McIntosh  
Photos by Jerry Martin

If you're a newcomer to Moody, you have more than likely asked this question to someone: 'What is there to do in town?' The short answer is 'plenty.' The City of Moody has a wide array of sports and activities for kids and adults and is adding to the selection all of the time. And since Moody has only one conveniently located park, the entire family can enjoy some fun and exercise in the great outdoors without driving all over town.

Moody City Park, located on Park Avenue across the street from City Hall, is an impressive 48-acre park with 11 athletic fields, four tennis courts, a 1.1-mile paved and lighted walking track and a large pavilion, perfect for an outdoor birthday party or family reunion. The park also sports an outdoor basketball court and a playground with adaptive equipment.

Those who come to Moody City Park for the first time will notice a baseball field outfitted with artificial turf. This isn't a leftover from the





Kevin Casey at bat during a game at the Miracle League baseball field.



Donna Fox takes an early morning walk with her dog Wheezie.



Pam Glenn congratulates Gentry Jordan as he rounds the bases during a game at the Miracle League baseball field in Moody.

1980s, but the home of the Moody Miracle League, a volunteer-operated charity that provides children with mental and physical challenges the chance to play baseball in an organized league. Since its opening day on April 6, 2000, the Moody Miracle League's specially designed playing surface has allowed children in wheelchairs to experience the joys of hitting, throwing, catching and *running* the bases.

During a game, every player gets a hit, gets on base and crosses home plate. No score is kept, and each player is paired with a buddy who helps them play the game and protects them from injury. "It encapsulates everything pure and good in the world," says Moody Parks and Recreation Director Mike Staggs. "It's incredible. Nobody's over there for the wrong reasons, I promise you that.

"No one ever yells at the umpires, and no one argues about what number they have, what position they're playing or what place they're batting in the batting order," he adds. "It's just pure is what it is."

Moody Parks and Recreation also provides more traditional sports and activities for youths, including fall and spring soccer seasons, baseball in spring and a low-key season in the fall, winter basketball and cheerleading, and fall football. Also this fall, Moody will offer youth wrestling, a sport launched for the first time in 2011.

Staggs created the team with 15 athletes, ages 5-12, and he fully expects to at least double that number in 2012. Staggs also launched a youth wrestling camp in the summer of 2012, hoping to introduce the sport to a new generation of young athletes.

Staggs is looking at offering a new tennis camp and has offered a youth speed and agility camp for the past several years, with instruction by Willie Smith, a 1984 Olympic gold medalist and Birmingham native. "He's done a speed camp for us the last three or four summers and does a wonderful job," says Staggs.

For adults, the big draw in Moody is softball. Staggs says he began offering organized softball play one night a week three years ago and has watched the sport grow to incredible levels since then.

"We finished our third year, and we're up to three nights a week, and we're looking at playing four, it's grown so much," Staggs says. "We're looking at potentially having a church league night as well."

Adult softball leagues are in play in the spring and fall.

The City of Moody also hosts several special events throughout the year, including the 5k Pumpkin Run, Bark in the Park and Oktoberfest.

For the future, Staggs says the city is looking at building a recreation facility to help accommodate indoor activities, like fitness and group-exercise classes, and indoor sports. Currently, the youth basketball, cheerleading and wrestling programs are housed in area churches and school facilities.

"We're just trying to find the property," says Staggs. "It's on the backburner, but there are plans in the future to build a rec center."

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