

# Wish List for 2014

By Celeste Kneirim

So, what is on everyone's wish list for 2014? Maybe as the movie Miss Congeniality says "World Peace"—wouldn't that be nice. Maybe better yet let's hope everyone in Congress actually works together instead of going with party lines. My hope is a home for every stray animal and a cheap, affordable program to help spay and neuter.

## But Here Are Some Softball Wishes for 2014:

- **That all of the people who are the "powers of the softball world", would actually sit down and talk about what is really good for the players**—right now the focus seems to be on who has the most power and who can make the most money off of the parents who are afraid their child will not get a scholarship. Kind of mimics the way it is in Congress now. Nothing is for the good of the people/kids like everyone says it is. **It shouldn't be about power and money; it should be about the players and the game of softball. So take a hard look at it and work together.**
- That coaches would realize that all young players need to be **taught the fundamental skills** of the game—too many players do not know them and it shows.
- That coaches need to **learn the strategy of the game**—softball is not just a homerun derby, it is a game of strategy.
- That coaches and parents would realize that **we are losing players to burnout**—kids are playing too many games, too many weekends and almost year round and that leads to burnout in any sport and any job.
- That coaches and parents would realize that the kids are traveling to and from games, tournaments, practices and private lessons so much that there is **little time for anything else** in their lives. Have them do a time management study where they write down everything they do for two weeks and look at it. It is eye opening.
- That coaches and parents realize that the cost of all of the traveling and lessons paid might equal a scholarship—so maybe look into grants, other type of scholarships and narrowing the search to a few schools to focus on instead of spending so much on the private lessons and traveling. Research those who are coaching to see if they are doing what is best for the player or just collecting money.
- That the coaches and the parents would realize that all kids are not created equally—**match the player with the school**. Too many coaches and parents push for unrealistic goals. I believe in making a kid the best they can be by giving them the fundamental skills and knowledge/strategies of the game but everyone has a limit. Too many kids are being pushed to schools above their limits when there are plenty of schools that are great matches for those kids. Please be realistic and don't bypass some really good programs in all divisions because the their coaches or parents want that top program. Do what is best for the kid.
- That the softball powers and organizations protect coaches against threats against their jobs. How many coaches have been fired because of parental pressure on the school's administration?

I think that is enough to wish for in one year. Softball is a great game that we all love. But let's get back to softball the way it should be played. Right now all sports seem to be played for one reason—a scholarship. I know what you are thinking right now, money is hard to come by so everyone needs a scholarship. I grew up in the South City of St. Louis with only my Mom supporting us (Dad died when I was 3). We made it by working hard, saving and sacrificing just like a lot of others. I wouldn't trade those experiences and lessons learned for anything and I thank my Mom everyday in my heart for it. Think about it.