



Bigger than Softball



Our Goal is to build not just softball players but provide the tools and confidence to be successful in any direction life takes them.

Not sure I can talk for 50 min. But I hope that you have a few takeaways to add to your program.



Where to start?

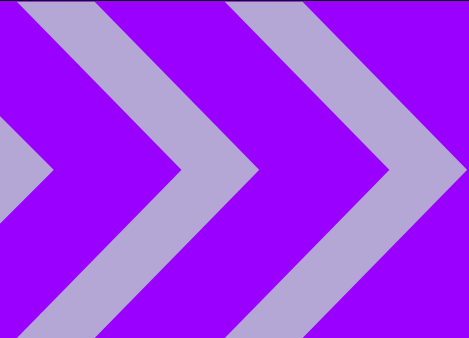
Captains?

- Application
- Interview



Provide Opportunities for Leadership

1. Team Goals
2. Lead Team Meeting
3. Provide Powerpoint about power words
4. Plan Team Building activities
5. Make the easy decisions
6. Provide Feedback to coaches



Being a captain helped me grow as a person and a leader. I learned to take responsibility for my teams actions and not just for my own. They are a extension of me because I'm the one leading them. It also allowed me to grow in my communication skills because my role was to be the middleman between the coach and the player so that my teammate could be guided on how to handle issues. I learned to be caring of other people lives and forced to think about what might be causing my teammates to act a certain way. Overall, all of these skills will be taken into my next chapter of life. Being a caption has made me a better person, leader, and teammate.



Karli Goodell

Being a captain at Shepherd High School will always be a huge part of my softball career. It made me realize that my voice matters, no matter what I said and that I could help people grow just by giving them simple advice. At first I was never a huge speaker on my thoughts but as I grew older I realized that my thoughts mattered. Being a captain isn't just telling people what to do , it is h=guiding them through their mistakes and helping grow the best way possible. I influenced others to not make bad choices outside softball and I also influenced them to be the best they can be. I think the best feeling ever is people asking for advice and them trusting me. Being a captain doesn't mean you are better it just means your coach trusted you to raise a higher standard for the team.



Aaryn Hardtke

Being a captain for the 2026 Shepherd softball team has been a huge blessing for me. It has helped me grow in communication, confidence, and helped me realize the impact I can have on others. It has also shown me what leadership really is. A leader isn't someone who is loud and finds speaking in groups easy. It is someone who others can trust, imitate, and look up to. I used to think I lacked the qualities to lead because I've never been good at stringing words together, especially in groups. Being a captain these last two years has shown me I truly can make an impact on others as a leader, even if it isn't in my well spoken words. I found that I could lead with my actions and my care for others rather than words. I could express words of encouragement one on one rather than in the circle. I could show others composure and what it looks like to pick yourself up when you are having a bad game and hold your head high even when it feels like you shouldn't be. I learned how confidence spreads and that when you are confident, others will start to feed off that confidence. That is how you lead. These lessons don't only apply to the softball field, but also life and I'm excited to continue to develop the skills that started here



Krista Dunn



Building a Community

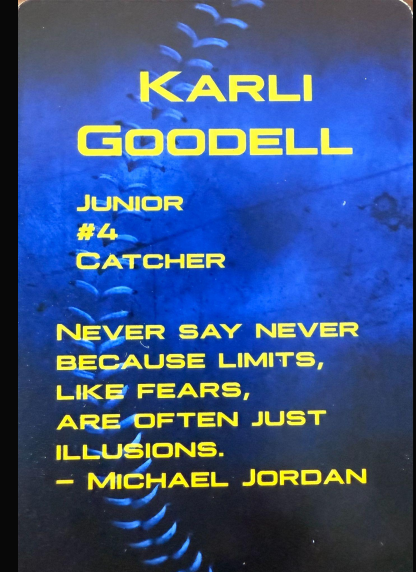
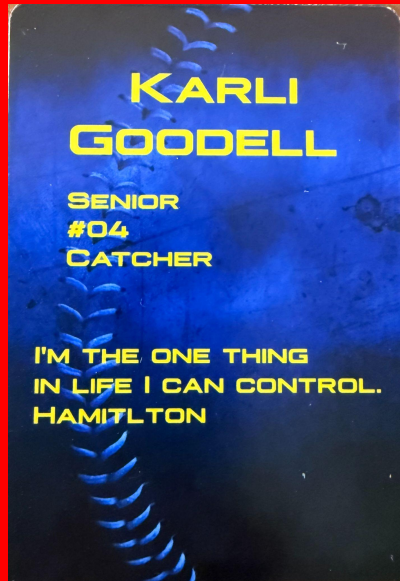
Fillie Buddies

Student K-5 can adopt a player for season.

- They get shirt, camp, treat at game, admission into game + one, and they come out on field before and after game. They will try and hang at field day or eat lunch with them. Sometimes it works out to watch their buddy play. Also first few that sign up get to bat girls.
- Good fundraiser



Trading Cards - Inspire the young ones

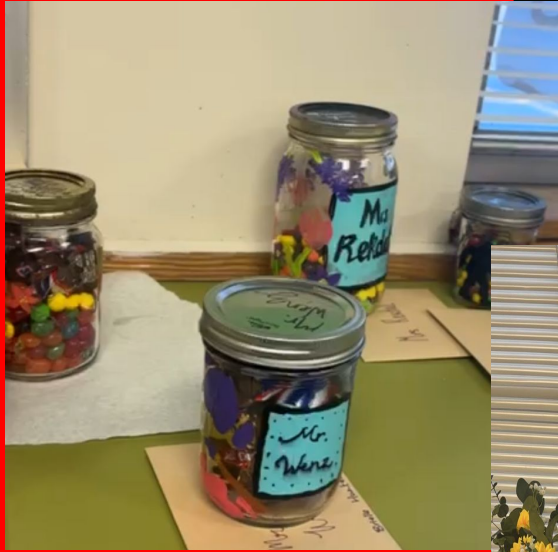




Impact Night

Seniors honor someone who has impacted their life

- * They write a handwritten letter inviting to game and why
 - At game their person receives a shirt with player's last name on the back
 - Letter is read about how person impacted their life



Gratitude Builds Morale

Teacher/Staff Appreciation

Painted Pint Jars

Wrote letters to a teacher that needed
some pick me up.

Flower Vases

Wrote letter to their favorite teacher
telling them thanks.





Stand for Something

Find phrases and words that the girls will buy into.

Dig Deeper - we had to stay focused and realize nothing was going to be a smooth ride

Drive - drive to get better and not just taking well we won so that good enough
Develop - they wrote team goals, personal goals, they communicated to coaches on how to help them accomplish their goals

Dominate - play with confidence, play without fear of failure

Building Expectations



Phones

- No phones at practice/games
- No phones at team dinners
- Road trips phones turned in at 10 p.m.



Practices

- Begin and end on time
- Post practices - helps to get things set up
- Find ways to not make the game boring and redundant
- Quote of Day - Develops a tradition



GOAL WORK

- Setting Individual Goals weekly/biweekly
- Provide opportunities for them to communicate needs
- Give Feedback
- Set team goals
- Check In's - beginning of year and by weekly

High Expectations

Higher Grades Required

* Develop relationship with teachers that you will back them

Require Community Service

Serving others is important. Have them umpire little league games. We help with field day and the color run at the school. (explain) We also help run Santa's Shop. (explain)

Exit Interviews

Players are given reflection questions ahead of time and then bring them to the meeting. Questions are shared on discussed. Coaches share what they saw of the year and what they would like to see for the future.

Build Resiliency - Life Coach

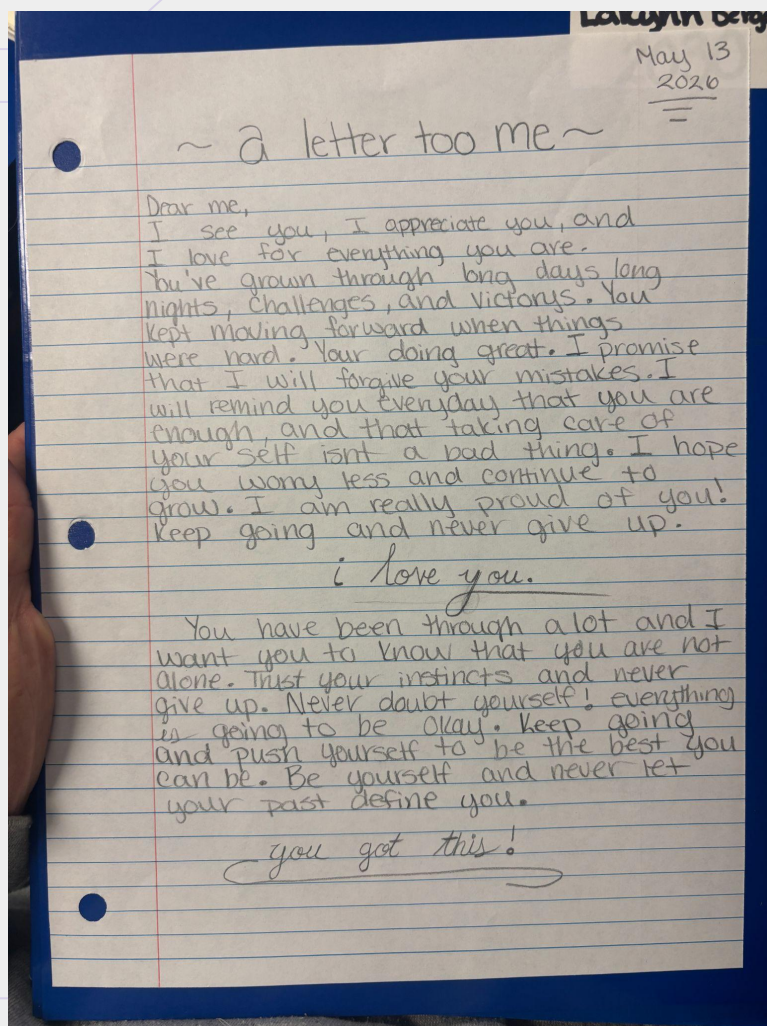
Mental

Reset Words- Yearly

Meditation/Visualization/breathing - every game

Letters of Affirmation - 2026

Created Posters on how Teammates See them- 2025



Allow FUN!

- Easter Egg Hunts
- Water Balloon Fights
- Overnight trips - family game nights
- Days off or team bond time - bowling, painting

Discussion time

Questions

What are some things you would add to the list?



THANK YOU!