

**SPEECH BY RED SOX CHAIRMAN TOM WERNER ANNOUNCING “THE RED SOX FOUNDATION AND MGH HOMEBASE PROGRAM” FOR NEW ENGLAND VETERANS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY AND POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AND THEIR FAMILIES. SEPT. 17, 2009 IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS:**

THANK YOU ALL FOR MAKING THE COMMITMENT TO COME HERE ON A THURSDAY AFTERNOON. AND THANK YOU TO ALL THE REMARKABLE PERSONNEL AT MASS GENERAL HOSPITAL, WHO ARE CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS INITIATIVE, STARTING WITH MGH PRESIDENT PETER SLAVIN, DR. JOHN PARRISH, OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PROGRAM ,AND DR LARRY RONAN. I ALSO WANT TO GIVE A SHOUT OUT TO OUR RED SOX FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MEG VAILLANCOURT, WHO HAS WORKED DAY AND NIGHT ON THIS PROGRAM.

I AM PERSONALLY VERY PROUD TO BE ON THE DAIS TODAY REPRESENTING THE RED SOX FOUNDATION.

WHEN JOHN HENRY, LARRY LUCCHINO, AND DAVID GINSBERG, ALL OF WHOM ARE HERE TODAY, AS WELL AS OUR OTHER PARTNERS AND I, WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO BECOME THE STEWARDS OF THE BOSTON RED SOX -- NOW EIGHT YEARS AGO -- WE MADE SOME PUBLIC PROMISES TO THIS COMMUNITY. WE PROMISED THAT WE WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT THE BOSTON RED SOX WOULD WIN NOT JUST ONE – BUT *MULTIPLE* -- WORLD SERIES TROPHIES. A PLEDGE THAT MANY THOUGHT FAR-FETCHED.

AND WE SAID THAT WE WANTED TO MAKE AS SIGNIFICANT AN IMPACT OFF THE FIELD AS WE WERE PROMISING TO MAKE ON THE FIELD.

WE KNOW HOW MUCH THE RED SOX MEAN TO GENERATIONS OF FANS, AND WE UNDERSTAND THE STRONG AND ENDURING BOND NEW ENGLANDERS HAVE WITH THIS TEAM. SO WE CREATED THE RED SOX FOUNDATION AT THAT TIME AND THROUGH IT, WE HOPED TO HARNESS THE PASSION OF RED SOX FANS AND PUT IT TO USE TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE IN NEW ENGLAND.

OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THIS NEW INITIATIVE DATES BACK TO OUR SECOND WORLD SERIES WIN. OUR OWNERSHIP GROUP AND OUR PLAYERS ATTENDED THE CONGRATULATORY CEREMONY AT THE WHITE HOUSE IN EARLY 2008. AS WE HAD IN 2004, WE ALSO ARRANGED A PRIVATE VISIT TO WALTER REED HOSPITAL SO WE COULD SHARE THE TROPHY WITH VETERANS , MANY OF WHOM HAD RECENTLY RETURNED FROM ACTION IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN.

AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, IT WAS AN EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE. I KNOW OUR PLAYERS WERE DEEPLY MOVED BY THE COURAGE THESE SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN SHOWED, NOT ONLY IN BATTLE BUT AFTERWARDS - FACING MANY SERIOUS CHALLENGES AS THEY STRUGGLED TO RECOVER . I WAS ALSO PERSONALLY STRUCK BY THE OPTIMISM OF THESE VETERANS WHO HAD GIVEN SO MUCH AND SO HONORABLY TO OUR COUNTRY.

WHILE WE WERE AT THE HOSPITAL, WE MET COLONEL CAM RITCHIE, WHO IS HERE TODAY, AND SHE TALKED ABOUT THE EXTRAORDINARY NUMBER OF SOLDIERS COMING BACK FROM IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN WHO WERE STRUGGLING WITH POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.

WE HAD NO IDEA HOW LARGE THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM WAS. COLONEL RITCHIE CITED STUDIES THAT SHOWED THAT AS MANY AS 30% OF VETERANS COMING HOME FROM IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN SHOWED SYMPTOMS OF POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER OR DEPRESSION. AND WE LEARNED THAT MILITARY COMMANDERS WERE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT AN ATTENDANT RISE IN SUICIDE AMONG THESE VETERANS .

FURTHERMORE, ANOTHER 1 IN 5 VETERANS OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM AND OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM IN AFGHANISTAN HAD SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY AS RESULT OF CONCUSSION BLASTS AND OTHER COMBAT RELATED INJURIES.

THERE ARE TWO THINGS WE LEARNED THAT PARTICULARLY SURPRISED ME:

- 1) MANY VETERANS WHO TRAINED AND SERVED SO BRAVELY HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO ADMIT THAT THEY NEED TO DEAL WITH THESE CHALLENGES. THESE SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN HAVE OFTEN BEEN TAUGHT TO “TOUGH IT OUT” ON THEIR OWN.
- 2) THE SECOND THING THAT SURPRISED ME IS THAT THE MISSION OF THE V.A., BY LAW AND THROUGH NO FAULT OF ITS OWN, IS BARRED FROM PROVIDING ANY SUBSTANTIAL SERVICES FOR THE VETERANS’ FAMILIES. WE KNOW THAT WHEN ONE MEMBER OF A FAMILY SERVES IN THE MILITARY, THEY ALL SERVE. AND WHEN ONE MEMBER IS WOUNDED, THE WHOLE FAMILY IS WOUNDED. SO REACHING OUT TO VETERANS’ FAMILIES IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO ME AND ALL OF US ON THE TEAM.

GIVEN THE POWER OF THE RED SOX BRAND, WE THOUGHT WE COULD HELP IN ARTICULATING THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, HELP FIND A WAY TO DE-STIGMATIZE THESE MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND ENCOURAGE VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES TO SEEK TREATMENT.

INDEED OF THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF VETERANS WHO NEED AND DESERVE TREATMENT, WE SUSPECT THAT MORE THAN HALF ARE NOT CALLING FOR HELP.

MASS GENERAL WAS ALREADY DEEP IN RESEARCH TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF BOTH POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY. THEY WERE KEEN ON NOT ONLY CREATING AN INNOVATIVE CLINIC, BUT ALSO DEVELOPING RESEARCH TO COORDINATE WORK BETWEEN HOSPITALS AND THE VA TO ACCELERATE THE KNOWLEDGE IN THIS AREA.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL IS ONE OF THE GREAT MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE WORLD, SO WE KNEW THAT IF WE COULD FIND A WAY TO COMBINE THOSE MEDICAL RESOURCES AND THE POWER OF THE RED SOX BRAND – THE RED SOX AND MASS GENERAL MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE A MODEST STEP FORWARD IN HELPING OUR HEROES.

BUT IN ORDER TO TRANSFORM THIS DREAM INTO REALITY –INTO A PRACTICAL PROGRAM THAT WOULD BE USEFUL TO VETERANS AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE VA AND TO THE HIGHEST AUTHORITIES IN THE MILITARY, WE NEEDED A CHAMPION.

FORTUNATELY, WE IN NEW ENGLAND HAD JUST SUCH A CHAMPION, LONG RECOGNIZED FOR HIS COMMITMENT TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE AND TO SUPPORTING OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM: SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY.

SENATOR KENNEDY AND HIS STAFF WORKED TIRELESSLY TO MAKE SURE WE WERE DEVELOPING A PROGRAM THAT WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO THE REAL NEEDS OF OUR VETERANS.

IN FACT, EVEN AS HIS ILLNESS WAS PROGRESSING, TEDDY REMAINED OUR ALL STAR PITCHER IN MAKING THE CASE FOR THE HOME BASE PROGRAM.

IN A LETTER HE WROTE JUST BEFORE HIS HEALTH TOOK ANOTHER SHARP DECLINE LATE THIS SUMMER, SENATOR KENNEDY DESCRIBED THE HOME BASE PROGRAM THIS WAY:

I QUOTE: “THE RED SOX AND MGH ARE ICONS IN NEW ENGLAND, BUT THEY ARE ALSO CHARITABLE LEADERS IN THE WORLD OF SPORTS AND MEDICINE. TOGETHER, THEY ARE COMMITTED TO HELPING REDUCE THE STIGMA OF PTSD AND TBI THAT TOO OFTEN MAKES VETERANS RELUCTANT TO SEEK THE CARE THEY NEED. ... I’M DEEPLY AND PERSONALLY DEVOTED TO THIS PROGRAM – THE SENATOR WROTE -- BECAUSE OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN CLEARLY REPRESENT THE VERY BEST THAT AMERICA HAS TO OFFER -- AND WE ALL OWE THEM A DEBT OF GRATITUDE THAT WE CAN NEVER FULLY REPAY.”

LIKE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS, WE OWE SENATOR KENNEDY A DEBT WE CAN NEVER REPAY. BUT TODAY, AS WE CELEBRATE THE LAUNCH OF THE RED SOX FOUNDATION AND MGH HOME BASE PROGRAM – WE WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR LATE SENATOR’S KEY ROLE IN CREATING THIS NEW UNDERTAKING BY REMINDING EVERYONE OF HIS LIFE LONG AND STEADFAST COMMITMENT TO OUR VETERANS.

AND SO WE ARE HONORED TODAY TO ANNOUNCE THAT BOTH HIS WIFE, VICKY KENNEDY, WHO HAS ACTED WITH SUCH GRACE AND DIGNITY DURING HER HUSBAND'S ILLNESS, AND CAROLINE KENNEDY, THE SENATOR'S NIECE AND PRESIDENT OF THE KENNEDY LIBRARY AND LIFE-LONG RED SOX FAN, BOTH HAVE AGREED TO PICK UP THE TORCH AND SERVE AS HONORARY DIRECTORS OF THE HOME BASE PROGRAM BOARD.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO SINGLE OUT ONE OF SENATOR KENNEDY'S TREMENDOUSLY TALENTED STAFF – WHO'S BEEN WITH THE SENATOR MORE THAN 47 YEARS AND WHOSE DEDICATION REALLY HELPED MAKE THE HOME BASE PROGRAM POSSIBLE – AND SHE IS HERE WITH US FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT TODAY - THANK YOU BARBARA SOULIOTIS.

ALONG WITH SENATOR KENNEDY THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE GIVEN US PROFOUND INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH THE PROBLEMS OF RETURNING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND THE SOLUTIONS. NONE HAVE BEEN MORE SUPPORTIVE THAN THE MAN I AM ABOUT TO INTRODUCE – U.S. SECRETARY OF VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, ERIC K. SHINSEKI.

AS MUCH AS WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH WITH OUR 'HOME BASE' PROGRAM, HE IS THE ONE MAN IN AMERICA WHO IS DAILY CHARGED WITH THE JOB OF SERVING ALL VETERANS. I AM PLEASED TO TELL YOU THAT WE BELIEVE THERE IS NO ONE MORE QUALIFIED FOR THE TASK OR COMMITTED TO THE CHALLENGE.

FROM OUR VERY FIRST DISCUSSIONS WITH THIS ADMINISTRATION, SECRETARY SHINSEKI HAS BEEN HONEST, ENTHUSIASTIC AND CONSTANTLY INSPIRATIONAL. HE UNDERSTANDS THE VERY REAL OBSTACLES FACING SOME RETURNING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND HE IS MAKING SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO IMPROVE THINGS.

SECRETARY SHINSEKI RETIRED FROM ACTIVE DUTY IN 2003 AFTER HAVING LED THE ARMY DURING OPERATIONS ENDURING FREEDOM AND IRAQI FREEDOM, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SEPTEMBER 11 TERRORIST ATTACKS. HE SERVED AS U.S. ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF FROM 1999 UNTIL TWO MONTHS BEFORE HIS RESIGNATION.

HIS LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IS VAST AND HIS RESUME QUITE EXTENSIVE. TO THE 'HOME BASE' PROGRAM, HIS PERSONAL COMMITMENT IS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS APPEARANCE HERE TODAY. ALTHOUGH I HOPE IT IS JUST A COINCIDENCE THERE IS A HOME GAME TONIGHT AS WE KNOW SECRETARY SHINSEKI IS A LOYAL MEMBER OF RED SOX NATION. WE ARE ALL HONORED BY HIS PRESENCE HERE TODAY, SO MAY I INTRODUCE THE HONORABLE ERIC K. SHINSEKI, THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS. *(Secretary Of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki spoke)*

WE DON'T WANT TO PROMISE TOO MUCH TODAY. WE KNOW THERE ARE A LOT OF VETERANS WHO NEED HELP AND WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT AS WITH ANY NEW PROGRAM WE WILL BEGIN MODESTLY.

TOWARD THAT END, TO CAPTURE THE POWER OF THE RED SOX BRAND, WE WILL BE RUNNING A SERIES OF PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT THE PROGRAM ON NESN AND OTHER STATIONS IN NEW ENGLAND. WE HAVE SEEN THE EXTRAORDINARY SUPPORT IN THIS INITIATIVE FROM OUR PLAYERS, OUR MANAGER, AND THE REST OF THE RED SOX ORGANIZATION. I BELIEVE THE PLAYERS HAVE BEEN SO RESPONSIVE BECAUSE THE MEN AND WOMEN COMING HOME ARE THE FRIENDS, SCHOOLMATES, AND NEIGHBORS OF OUR PLAYERS. THEY GREW UP DOWN THE BLOCK FROM OUR GUYS.

WE WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU ONE SUCH PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT THAT WILL BE LAUNCHED FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER THIS EVENING...

(Public Service Announcement on the Red Sox Foundation and Mass General Hospital Home Base Program featuring Iraq War veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury and/or PTSD and Red Sox Pitcher Tim Wakefield– available on [www.redsoxfoundation.org](http://www.redsoxfoundation.org))

I WANT TO THANK THE VETERANS IN THIS PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THEIR SERVICE AND FOR SHARING THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH US. THANK YOU FOR BEING WITH US TODAY.

IN CONCLUSION, TODAY IS AN IMPORTANT DAY FOR THE RED SOX FOUNDATION. WE ARE PROUD OF OUR NEW PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERSHIP WITH MASS. GENERAL HOSPITAL MAKING A NEW PLACE THAT NEW ENGLAND VETERANS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY AND POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER CAN CALL THEIR “ HOME BASE. “

AND ONCE AGAIN, WE WANT TO EXTEND OUR THANKS TO THE VETERANS AND TO ALL OF THE ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY IN THE ROOM AND ACROSS NEW ENGLAND. WE SAY TO THEM – “YOU ARE NOT ALONE.” JUST LIKE AT THE RED SOX, THERE IS A TEAM OF PEOPLE WE ARE PUTTING IN PLACE TO HELP YOU. AND TO THOSE OF YOU THAT CAME TODAY TO CELEBRATE THE START OF THIS NEW INITIATIVE FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES, WE HOPE YOU WILL PLEASE JOIN OUR TEAM AND HELP THE HOME BASE PROGRAM GROW AND SERVE MORE OF OUR NATION’S HEROES .

*(Please note: Speaking program also included remarks by MGH President Peter Slavin, US Secretary of Veteran’s Affairs Eric Shinseki, Home Base Director John Parrish, ABC News anchor Bob Woodruff and three veterans, who spoke eloquently and courageously about their diagnosis and struggles with Traumatic Brain Injury and PTSD following combat in Iraq. An on field pregame ceremony at Fenway Park that evening featured veterans and active duty military with Red Sox players, owners, MGH doctors and Red Sox Foundation staff, was broadcast live by NESN (New England Sports Network). For information on “The Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program,” please visit [www.redsoxfoundation.org](http://www.redsoxfoundation.org) or [www.homebaseprogram.org](http://www.homebaseprogram.org)*

**PLEASE JOIN OUR TEAM TO SUPPORT VETERANS WHO HAVE SERVED US! We welcome tax deductible charitable donations to The Home Base Program. Please send checks or credit card information to: THE RED SOX FOUNDATION, 4 YAWKEY WAY, BOSTON MA 02215. Attention: Meg Vaillancourt, Executive Director. Nonprofit Tax ID# 33-1007984 All donations will be earmarked solely for this program and gratefully acknowledged.**