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Section **B**

SPRING TRAINING INVITEE



Local boy will be special guest of O's

URBANA — **DILLON PAPIER**, a 4-year-old baseball fan who suffers from a rare terminal disease, will spend several days this week at the Orioles' spring training complex in Fort Lauderdale, meeting Baltimore players, getting their autographs and being a special guest of the team at their first home exhibition game on Friday.

The trip was arranged by friends of the Papier family who live in the Urbana area.

"He understands that he will get to see baseball, but he doesn't understand how special this is," said Darrile Papier, Dillon's mother.

"He deserves the trip," said Eric Scheidhauer, the neighbor who arranged it.

Dillon, who turned 4 on Aug. 25, suffers from Niemann-Pick Type C disease. He's only one of 500 people in the world to have Type C recessive gene disease.

Niemann-Pick is a group of rare inherited disorders of fat metabolism. Type C leads to a buildup of cholesterol in such areas as the spleen and liver and the accumulation of gangliosides in the brain. The ganglioside buildup leads to eventual damage to the nervous system. The disease is always fatal.

Dillon was diagnosed with Niemann-Pick when he was about 2 and a half years old. Most children live five to 10 years after they are diagnosed.

Watching Dillon in his house in Urbana last week, he seemed like a normal 4 year old. He's outgoing, friendly and very active. He was playing baseball inside with his father and watching cartoons on television.

He loves baseball and it comes naturally. His father, Mark, has been the assistant baseball coach at Thomas Johnson since the early 1990s.

"He's transfixed by baseball," his father said. "Before he could walk, he was watching games. He's our mascot at TJ games. He will sit on the bench and watch games. When the TJ season ends, he will have me drive him all around Frederick, looking for Little Leagues games."

He even likes watching baseball instructional tapes.

He even likes watching baseball instructional tapes.

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WHEN DILLON WAS AN infant, he was originally diagnosed with Neonatal Hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver. He received treatments for the disease and his mother said he appeared to be well on his way to recovery.

Touching all the bases

By **STAN GOLDBERG**

(See DILLON B-2)

Staff photos by *Shay Lawrence*

Dillon Papier, above, will be visiting the Baltimore Orioles at Spring Training in Florida. In the upper right, Dillon is pictured with his mother Darrile, left, and father Mark.

Dillon

(Continued from B-1)

But on his last visit to the doctors, they noticed something was wrong with Dillon's spleen. More tests were done. Eventually, he was diagnosed with Niemann-Pick Type C.

There is no cure for the disease. He does take an experimental drug called Zavesca twice a day. It tastes terrible and can cause tremors and stomach problems.

"The best case scenario is that it will slow the disease down," his mother said.

He also goes to NIH every six months where he takes part in a study. He is there for three days.

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THROUGHOUT IT ALL, Dillon continues to love baseball. Last year the Bowie Baysox had a special day for him. (His grandmother lives in Bowie). The manager took him out with him so he could exchange lineup cards with the umpires (Dillon likes umpires). He has attended

Orioles and National games over the years.

His father said he stays all nine innings of the games. He doesn't want to leave. But it's a baseball thing. His father once took him to a Redskins game and he wanted to leave by halftime.

Dillon also likes to play baseball and eventually wants to be on a team with neighborhood children. Because of the disease, he has some problems seeing the ball in the field, but no problems hitting or throwing.

The Papier's neighbors knew about Dillon's disease. Two of them, Richie Bresee and Mike Gilligan, decided to do something to help the family.

"We had a party over the Christmas holidays and reached out to the neighborhood," Gilligan said. "We asked people to make donations to the Niemann-Pick Foundation. We raised \$1,100 the night of party."

One of the people who attended the party was Scheidhauer, who ran the food service at Oriole Park at Camden Yards for years. He worked for John Angelos, son of Orioles owner Peter Angelos. When Scheidhauer heard about Dillon, he sent an e-mail to John Angelos, asking for his help.

"He got back to me in a couple of hours and said let me know what you need," Scheidhauer said.

Scheidhauer decided a trip to spring training would be the perfect thing for Dillon, even better than doing something during the regular season. He contacted the Orioles community relations department, which arranged for Dillon to be the team's guest.

"I figured the earlier he went, the better," Scheidhauer said. "The players are so much more relaxed at this time of the year. There is such a laid-back atmosphere."

Scheidhauer, along with Bresee and Gilligan, decided to give the

family money so all three could go on the trip. Dillon is the Papier's only child. The neighbors also planned to have a golf tournament in September to benefit Niemann-Pick disease.

According to Orioles public relations director Bill Stetka, Dillon and his family will be taken to the field prior to Friday's game against the Florida Marlins. He will get to meet the players, including Dillon's two favorites, Brian Roberts and Corey Patterson. Stetka said he will need two baseballs to hold all of the autographs.

The Orioles also plan to give Dillon a hat and a shirt and put his name on the scoreboard.

It will be a great trip for someone like Dillon, who loves the game of baseball.

"When Eric told me, I was surprised, extremely excited," Gilligan said of the trip. "We all know what a huge baseball fan Dillon is."