

# Lower Township, Cub's Szczur

## Offer a Night to Remember

DIAMOND BEACH — The Tiger Teen girls had a night to remember including dinner at a first-class restaurant and meeting Matt Szczur, a Chicago Cubs player who graduated from the Lower Cape May Regional High School District.

Tiger Teens is a mentoring program that operates as a partnership of the Richard M. Teitelman School and the Lower Township Recreation Department.

In existence since October, the girls' group event Dec. 19 started with a trolley ride to Mid Atlantic Center for the Arts and Humanities (MAC) Emlen Physick Estate for a tour of the mansion decked out in all its Christmas splendor.

A second trolley ride donated by MAC transported the students to Marie Nicole's restaurant in Wildwood Crest.

The evening continued with a showing an ESPN video profiling the life of Szczur who has been playing in the Chicago Cub's Tennessee farm club. Sports writers are suggesting Szczur is a prospect to move up to the major league team as a centerfielder next season.

The video focused on Szczur's days playing both football and baseball at Villanova as well as his life-saving donation of his bone marrow to a baby in the Ukraine.

After the 11-minute video ended, Szczur walked into the restaurant to the applause of the Tiger Teens. He posed for photos with the girls and offered a message of inspiration.

Szczur said teachers in the Lower Cape May Regional School District cared about every student. He advised the girls to never be afraid to ask a question of their teachers.

"Every game I play, I run out to centerfield and say a prayer and make sure I tell myself never, ever give up," said Szczur.

He said he remembers to never give up even if he is having a bad day on the ball field.

"That next play could be the game-winning play or the game-changing play," said Szczur.

The Barnabie family, owners of Marie Nicole's, donated a sumptuous four-course dinner to each of the girls. They were served by Stephen Del Monte and family and friends of the owners.

Each girl received a gift bag that included a customized winter ski hat donated by North Wildwood Shirt Shop.

Lower Township Recreation Department Assistant Superintendent Jim Ridgway emceed the event and presented Szczur to the audience.

"It propels us into the new year," he said. "Plans are being made for activities in January and February and new members are being accepted."

Seventh and eighth grade girls at the Teitelman School may join Tiger Girls.

Video support and filming of the dinner were handled by Shelley Vogeley and Debbie Gager.