

## **Twins Talk**

### **Great Fans**

The Minnesota Twins' 2008 total attendance of 2,302,431 is the third-highest single-season total in team history -- trailing only 1988 and 1992. Those were the years which followed the World Series, when the Twins were World Series Champions. This also marks the first time in Twins history that the team has drawn more than two million fans for four consecutive years. As Bert Blyleven says, the fans have been the 10<sup>th</sup> man on the field as they show their tremendous support at all home games. They have really made a difference in this incredible season.

Carlos Gomez had this to say about the fans: "You know, it's amazing! It's amazing! We've got good fans in Minnesota. When you are a player and you come here, and you hear your name so loud like that, you feel more emotions to play baseball."

### **Giving More Than RBI's**

Justin Morneau's hot bat may have cooled down at the end of the regular season, but his thoughtfulness and generosity didn't. Last week Justin donated \$11,000 to renovate the Northeast Ballpark in Minneapolis. The project will cost \$21,000 with \$11,000 donated by Morneau and \$10,000 donated by the Minnesota Twins Community Fund. The renovations will include building a new outfield fence, top dressing and seeding the outfield, adding an irrigation quick coupler to the pitcher's mound, painting existing fencing and installing new foul poles. Justin was at the park with his fiancée the other day making the announcement and going over the renovations with city officials. Justin's fiancée, the lovely Krista Martin from Winthrop, Minnesota, laughed as she told me that this appearance was a surprise to her. "I knew he was going to renovate this park, but it was just last night that he said to me: 'Don't forget about our

press conference tomorrow morning.' That was the first I knew about it. A fan in the crowd overheard her and joked: "Typical guy!" She replied: "Yeah! But he is a really good guy!"

I asked Justin why he made the donation. He said: "I may have been raised in Canada, but I'm in Minnesota now. I play ball here, I live here, and I want to help others here." Then he and Krista looked at each other and smiled.

Justin has also renovated a field in Krista's home town of Winthrop, and will be doing more good deeds around Minnesota [so long as he's a Twin -- and that should be for a good long time.]

It's not unusual to find Justin spending time with children, giving autographs and posing for photographs. But more importantly, whenever it's possible, he gives them one-on-one time. A teacher and her class showed up at his press conference, and Justin extended his stay to visit with them. As Justin got ready to leave, the children broke into a chant: "MVP, MVP, MVP!"

No matter who the nation's baseball writers vote for, Justin will always be an MVP to the kids of Minnesota.