

It's that time of year. The Vancouver Canucks have failed to make the NHL playoffs for the 3rd consecutive season!

Setting the NHL playoffs aside, springtime is when America's favorite pastime makes its return. That's right, Major League Baseball is back. 2018 is an exciting year here in the Valley of Sun as it marks the 20th anniversary for the local Arizona Diamondbacks organization. Since their inception, the team has won a World Series championship (2001), made six Postseason appearances (including last season) and donated more than \$55 million to the community.

When it came time for [Homes for Good](#) to partner with a local organization, April was perfect to team up for opening day with [Striking Out Poverty](#) and the initiative D-Backs Shortstop, Nick Ahmed, has committed too.

I was first introduced to [Striking Out Poverty](#) through the acting Manager of Sports Partnerships, Milam Byers. [Striking Out Poverty](#) is a "first of its kind" campaign by [Food for the Hungry](#) to meet the most urgent needs in the most vulnerable communities in the Dominican Republic.

If you're a baseball fan, I probably don't need to tell you how important baseball is in the Dominican Republic. It's more than just a pastime, it's a lifestyle and, for many, a way out. Albert Pujols, Manny Ramirez, David Ortiz and the list goes on. So many of our favorite MLB players come from the DR.

What you may not know is the extreme poverty that exists in the Dominican Republic. The current unemployment rate is 14.4% and 36% of the country lives below the poverty line. With so many professional baseball players originating from the DR, it's been a huge priority for not only the athletes, but MLB and other organizations, like [Food for the Hungry](#), to give back to the region.

[Striking Out Poverty](#) has sought to use the great game of baseball to provide necessities like clean drinking water, health care, stable education and even a baseball project to communities in the Dominican Republic. Going into its 3rd season, [Striking Out Poverty](#) has enlisted the help of several MLB players around the league to raise awareness including: Dee Gordon (Mariners), Liam Hendriks (A's), Chase Anderson (Brewers), Luke Weaver (Cardinals), Adam Wainwright (Cardinals), Austin Hedges (Padres), Rob Refsnyder (Indians), Brett Phillips (Brewers), and Nick Ahmed, short stop for the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Last year Nick raised over \$12,000 for [Striking Out Poverty](#) and this year he's back again to help end poverty in the Dominican Republic. Nick has pledged \$100 for every hit he has this season and Adam Wainwright has agreed to match up to \$15,000! You can personally pledge additional dollars for each hit Nick has this season by visiting [Pledgeit.org](#). The money raised will help fund two water projects in the community

of El Mogote, located in the province of Monte Plata. There are roughly 230 families in this community and about 805 people in total.

The first project is to provide access to the water and to build the water infrastructure. The second project will be to create water purification system since the region currently lacks access to clean water.

As a lifelong sports fan, I've seen what sports can do to a person, community and even a nation. You don't have to speak the same language to communicate during a game, you communicate through the sport. The Dominican Republic is a small country overwhelmed with poverty, but the same passion as anywhere else in the world when it comes to their sport. I'm humbled to help [Strike Out Poverty](#) with this month's Homes For Good initiative.

Specifically, I'll be raising funds to support Nick's efforts to provide clean water to the El Mogote Community. For every visitor at my open houses this month, I'll donate \$1 to Nick Ahmed's campaign.

If you'd like to learn more about the organization please visit [StrikingOutPoverty.com](#) or you can also visit [HomesForGoodAZ.com](#) to learn more as well. If you'd like to support Nick you can join his initiative at [Pledgeit.org](#).

“Anytime you have an opportunity to make a difference in this world and you don't, you are wasting your time on this earth.” -- Roberto Clemente.