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For Immediate Release

GHI Honors Harlem RBI Teen Robert Rivera with First Pitch at Mets Game

Avid Mets Fan Regularly Travels Two Hours From Queens to Harlem to Play on Harlem RBI Team

(April 26, 2006 - New York, NY) -- A star baseball player and exemplary leader from the Harlem RBI will throw the first pitch at the Mets-Reds game at Shea Stadium on June 21, thanks to Group Health Incorporated (GHI), the New York City-based health insurer. Seventeen-year-old Robert Rivera, an avid Mets fan who plays catcher on the GHI Kings team, will take the mound at 7:00 p.m.

This is the sixth consecutive year that GHI CEO Frank Branchini has relinquished the honor of throwing the first pitch in order to grant this dream-come-true to a deserving child or teen. It also is GHI's seventh season of sponsoring the Harlem RBI baseball team, the GHI Kings. Both are part of the company's ongoing commitment to helping children, particularly through an involvement with sports to encourage health and fitness.

The Harlem RBI coaches collectively determined that the honor of throwing the first pitch at the Mets game should go to the individual who consistently shows competitive spirit, extraordinary effort, good sportsmanship, and in general exemplifies what it means to be a team player.

In choosing Robert Rivera, Rich Berlin, Executive Director of the Harlem RBI, noted, "Over the many years that the coaching staff and Rob's teammates have known him, we all have come to respect him not only as a player and team leader, but also as a person. We admire him for his dedication to the team and to the Harlem RBI program as a whole, where he has been a member since he was 10 years old."

The coaches also noted that, unlike most of his teammates who live in the neighborhood, Rob regularly travels two hours from Queens, where he moved when he was twelve. Yet, he is a stalwart at practice, rarely, if ever, missing one, and continuously rises to challenges that the staff and team place upon him. On several occasions last year, Rob started his journey at 5:00 AM in order to take his place behind the plate for an 8:00 AM game. Rob is completing his junior year at George Washington Carver High School.

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Frank Branchini, CEO of GHI, said, “Robert Rivera exhibits a truly commendable dedication to the Harlem RBI program, to his team, and to baseball. The character traits that Rob is developing now surely will serve him well throughout the rest of his life. We at GHI are pleased to be able to give the honor of the first pitch to a young man such as Rob, and we’re proud to support the excellent work of the Harlem RBI.”

Group Health Incorporated (GHI) is a statewide health insurer serving New Yorkers since 1937. GHI and its wholly-owned subsidiary, GHI HMO, provide health insurance and administrative services to more than 2.6 million people. GHI offers customers a variety of PPO, EPO, HMO, as well as prescription drug, dental, and vision plans. Throughout its history GHI has pioneered many of the programs that are now standard in the health insurance field. For additional information about GHI, please visit www.ghi.com.

Harlem RBI is a year-round sports, educational, and enrichment program located in East Harlem. Harlem RBI uses baseball and softball and the power of teams to provide inner city youth with opportunities to play, to learn and to grow, inspiring them to recognize their potential and realize their dreams. In addition to baseball and softball programs for participants ages seven to eighteen, Harlem RBI offers a comprehensive range of year-round, developmentally appropriate activities including an after-school program, internship opportunities, a counseling and referral service, The REAL (Reading and Enrichment Academy of Learning) Kids summer program and the Team Enrichment program for junior high school participants. Each of these programs allows Harlem RBI to maintain a continued, consistent presence in each young person's life from season to season and year to year. Visit www.harlemrbi.org.

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