

Gigi finds new meaning in diamonds and dugouts

By Sherri Gardner Howell

Everyone told me that grandchildren would cause amazing changes in my life. I believed them without hesitation. I "officially" became a grandmother on Oct. 20, 2013, when my younger son married Olivia and 8-year-old Cohen became part of our family. In truth, Cohen and I had been unofficial family since the day he was born, but we were glad our status was now permanent.

When Trey and Kinsey brought King, now almost 3 months old, into our lives, the joy multiplied. Those Gigi — that's my official name — feelings were everything everyone said they would be.

In the past two weeks, however, Cohen has done the impossible. I have been visiting in Seattle, helping with the day-to-day life of two hard-working parents. Olivia has been traveling for work, and Brett is in the middle of one of his busy seasons, so I have been rejoicing in being able to be of some help while spending precious time with the Seattle family.

Here's the impossible feat Cohen has accomplished: He has made me a baseball fan.

Our boys were soccer players. They played a little basketball, and Trey played one season of baseball, but we were all-in with soccer. I love soccer in any form — from AYSO to MLS to European (Go Barcelona!). Going to a World Cup is near the top of my sports bucket list and will probably be No. 1 if Peyton Manning retires before he gets to another Super Bowl.

Baseball and I, however, just never clicked. I don't understand it and find the games way too long and slow. After I stopped eating hot dogs, I couldn't find a single reason to go to a game.



In the past two weeks, however, the Queen Anne Little League Flames have made me a fan. Cohen has had two games and four practices since I got here, and I am reluctant to leave without seeing another game. They won their first game Thursday night — 14 to 11 — and Cohen had a single, double, triple, 4 RBIs and scored twice. In the first game, he got to pitch one inning and had three strikeouts.

I am learning the lingo — full count, two-away, bad hop. I even learned the cheer the guys chanted when one of their players is at bat, but I don't think — from the looks I got — that parents are supposed to join in. Thursday's game was more than two hours long, and I didn't even open my Kindle.

On top of the game excitement, you should see Cohen in his uniform! His team's kind sponsor lets them have their team name on the shirts instead of the business logo, so he looks very official and so handsome. Decked out in Flame red and black, his hat pulled down just right, slapping his glove at shortstop as he chatters to the pitcher — well, it's a heart-melting sight for Gigi.

Cohen is still in the "all-sports" mode and also plays soccer, football and basketball, so I have no idea where his passion will land. I do know that I'm safe, no matter the decision. Baseball is now a slam-dunk — I mean, a home run — in my book.

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