

## Ferrarese goes to bat for kids

By [RYAN ORR - Staff Writer](#)

February 17, 2008 - 12:22AM

An Apple Valley man who has struck out Mickey Mantle and shares a record with Babe Ruth is better known for his history of giving to others than for his time in the Major Leagues.

Don Ferrarese, 78, has lived in the Victor Valley since 1963, and since that time has touched thousands of residents in San Bernardino County through his charity work.

At 78, he has more energy than many half his age.

Ferrarese has hosted more than 100 charitable wine auctions throughout southern California, raising over \$1 million for various foundations and organizations.

“We have never received a penny for our efforts,” Ferrarese said. “It was strictly a donation of our time.”

At one point Ferrarese was on 11 different committees at one time.

He said once he volunteered for something, his name was thrown around as someone who would do anything.

“Once I volunteered for something, it snowballed on me,” he said.

In the past 43 years, he has coached all levels of local baseball teams to satisfy the nostalgia he has for the sport that first made him a nationally recognized figure.

From 1955 to 1962, Ferrarese played for the Baltimore Orioles, Cleveland Indians, Chicago White Sox, Philadelphia Phillies and St. Louis Cardinals.

He still has a picture of him pitching to Mickey Mantle, at which time he vividly



**James Quigg / Staff Photographer**

Don Ferrarese shows off some of his memorabilia from his years playing baseball in the Major Leagues. Ferrarese played with

remembers he struck him out. He also shares a hitting record with Babe Ruth, being one of the only pitchers to hit three doubles in a row.

Even during his stint in the majors, he took the time to hold clinics and teach kids about the game.

After his career ended, he moved to Apple Valley to work for his parents deli, Hugo's, which people who have been here long enough still remember fondly.

Ferrarese's parents immigrated here from Italy and were what he calls "hard working people."

When his father suffered a heart attack, he told his two sons, including Ferrarese, that they shouldn't work as hard, or they would end up like him. Subsequently, they were each able to take every other Sunday off while the other worked a double shift.

After inheriting the business and moving it to Victorville, he grew tired of the industry and got into real estate.

Ferrarese now owns Apple Valley Land Company, which deals in commercial real estate.

One of his greatest achievements to date and a culmination of his charitable efforts is the Don Ferrarese Charitable Foundation.

Founded two years ago, the foundation awards a \$4,000 scholarship to a student from each of the local high schools, not for their athletic or academic ability, but focused on how much they've given back to the community.