

# Mass high-five at Flying Squirrels game sets world record

Randy Hallman  
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You could feel the positive vibe.

The seventh inning stretch of Thursday's baseball game at The Diamond had an extra element. Before the traditional singing of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," the crowd did a mass high-five. The 4,694 in attendance followed instructions, finding hand-slap partners, then waiting while the public-address announcer counted down "3-2-1," and

then an enormous cheer and, with hands raised, a hearty smack. A new world record had been established.

The all-together-now palm slap eclipsed the mark set by 3,504 people during a basketball game in Las Vegas on March 5, according to Guinness World Records. The record-breaking moment was the result of a partnership of the Flying Squirrels and Positive Vibe Café, a restaurant that provides training in the food-service industry for people with disabilities.

In seats close to the field, Brent and Amy Rusnak of Mechanicsville celebrated their record-holding status with their daughter Reese, 5, and son Cole, 2. Brent Rusnak said the family comes to a few games each year. "They love it," he said, waving toward Reese and Cole. "They really like Nutzy the Squirrel." He and his wife said the promotion to help Positive Vibe was an event to be applauded.

Rick Sanford of Prince George County had a seat behind home plate and was enjoying the cool May evening and the game with his wife, Amanda Sanford, and daughter, Heather Woods. Told about the high-five event, they said they liked the idea of being part of an official world record. They said they understood why Guinness would not likely include their names in the documentation. "It's really a great thing for the Squirrels to do," Amanda Sanford said. "They are part of this community, and what Positive Vibe does is important. I know a lot of people with disabilities, and sometimes it's hard for them to find work. This is really a good thing."

Kevin Jaglowski of Milwaukee was taking a break from his job. He's in town working on a three-month project with Altria. "I was pleasantly surprised to be part of a world record," Jaglowski said. Told about Positive Vibe Café, he said now that he knows about the place, he might make a point of dining there.

Positive Vibe Café owner Garth Larcen said the promotion gained exposure for the nonprofit training program and raised money crucial to the mission of the restaurant. Fans bought T-shirts announcing that the wearer is a "WORLD RECORD HOLDER."

They also were invited to donate to the restaurant as they left the game. "Our people are at the exits," he said. "We call them our bucket brigade. We want to 'Keep the Vibe Alive.'"

The restaurant, at 2825 Hathaway Road, also invited fans to its May 20 Vibe Fest, a celebration of music and food. "We opened in January 2005," Larcen said. "We now have well over 500 graduates. It works because food service is one of the best occupations for people with disabilities."