



FRANCIS CRESCIA/TOWN CRIER

**CAMP LEADERS:** Starting the North Toronto Baseball Camp are university students, from left, Gabe Diamond, Alex Day, Jeremy Weisz and Lee Berge.

## Four friends turn fun into jobs for summer, setting up baseball camp

**KAROLYN COORSH**

Town Crier

Four enterprising 20-year-old university students have stepped up to the plate this summer and started their own baseball camp.

Gabe Diamond, Jeremy Weisz, Alex Day and Lee Berger have just kicked off North Toronto Baseball Camp's first summer session, an idea that began brewing last August.

"When we got involved in coaching, we realized we still had a really big passion for the game," says Diamond, who along with Weisz and Day headed up one of the North Toronto Baseball Association's AA teams last season.

This year, they decided to take their fun and turn it into a fulltime summer job on their own terms.

A typical day at the camp, located at Memorial Park (Chaplin Cres. and Eglinton Ave. West), will focus on specific skill sets — such as hit-

ting, base running and pitching — in the morning, followed by afternoon games.

"It will give the kids a chance to showcase the skills they've learned in the morning in a game situation," Diamond said.

The foursome was intent on trying something different when planning the day camp, which is not affiliated with the city's camp system.

"A lot of camps in the city are either extremely baseball-oriented and very, very rigid and not that fun or they're completely recreational," Diamond said. "You don't really learn that much about baseball."

Each week-long session is \$250 (plus tax) per child, with discounts available for multiple weeks and for siblings. Each camper is expected to bring a glove, hat and his or her lunch. All other equipment is provided. A regular day is 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., but extended stay is available.

At first the group was concerned a

lack of reputation might hinder their chances of attracting parents shopping for summer kids activities.

"Our initial obstacles associated with demand for the camp have really been leveled a bit so we're not too worried," said Diamond. "Our numbers are exceeding our expectations."

Enrollment before the first day of camp was about 100, spread out over the seven sessions. Registration is open all summer.

Established camps in the city have also taken notice. Diamond and his crew have also agreed to send extra counsellors to teach baseball half days for part of the summer at Bayview Glen day camp.

While running a business may seem daunting to university students, Diamond and Berger, both business majors at Western University, are not in unfamiliar territory. The duo has operated a medical equipment supply business that was born out of a Grade 11 school project.