

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**GEORGETOWN VISITATION PREPARATORY SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 2, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Sydney Love-Baker of Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School as its 2015-16 Gatorade District of Columbia Softball Player of the Year. Love-Baker is the fourth Gatorade District of Columbia Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Love-Baker as District of Columbia's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Love-Baker joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alicia Hollowell (2000-01, Fairfield HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Angela Tincher (2002-03, James River HS, Va.) and Kenzie Fowler (2006-07, Canyon del Oro HS, Ariz.).

The 5-foot-8 junior first baseman batted .645 with 16 home runs, 37 runs scored and 57 RBI this past season, leading the Cubs (11-9) to the Independent School League AA semifinals and the District of Columbia State Athletic Association championship game. A returning Washington Post Second Team All-Met selection, Love-Baker worked 13 walks and belted 25 extra-base hits, recording a .688 on-base percentage and 1.629 slugging percentage. A finalist for the 2015 USA Baseball Women's National Team, she helped lead Visitation to the ISL AA and DCSAA championships as a sophomore in 2015.

Also a basketball standout, Love-Baker has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has volunteered on behalf of Vacation Bible School and her church's youth group, including efforts to beautify the community and assist the area homeless.

"I have been coaching in the ISL for about 16 years and Sydney Love-Baker is by far the best pure hitter I have seen during that time," said Wayne Loving, head coach at rival Potomac School in McLean, Va. "She hits for power and average. Sydney hit two home runs against us over the fence to the opposite field. In my 16 years at Potomac School, I don't think I have seen five home runs hit over the fence, much less hit to the opposite field."

Love-Baker will begin her senior year of high school this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Love-Baker joins recent Gatorade District of Columbia Softball Players of the Year Alee Burke (2014-15, Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School), Sarah Ing (2013-14, 2012-13 & 2011-12, National Cathedral School), Caroline Sealander (2010-11 & 2009-10, Maret School), Christina Clark (2008-09, Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School), and Alie Kolbe (2007-08 & 2006-07, National Cathedral School) among the state's list of former award winners.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit www.gatorade.com/poy.

###