

Astros' Altuve visits 100-year-old retired missionary

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HOUSTON—José Altuve, second baseman of the Houston Astros, took some time out of his off-season to pay a surprise visit to a special fan at the Buckner Parkway Place senior living community.

Shirley Clark, who turned 100 years old on Dec. 2, is a die-hard Major League Baseball fan. As a resident of Houston for the second half of her life, the Astros are her team of choice. She watches as many games as she can, whether at the stadium or on TV.

Other Parkway Place residents who want to find out baseball scores and statistics from the previous night know they can ask Clark.

News of Clark's birthday and her status as a dedicated fan reached Altuve, a six-time MLB All-Star and 2017 American League Most Valuable Player.

Three decades as a missionary in Venezuela

He especially was touched by her work as a Southern Baptist missionary for more than 30 years in his home country of Venezuela.



Shirley Clark, retired missionary and resident at Buckner Parkway Place, gladly receives a baseball presented by Jose Altuve of the Houston Astros. (Buckner Photo)

Prior to living in Houston, Clark and her late husband Charles worked as international missionaries, including in Venezuela. She fondly recalls her time there ministering to those in need and forming lifelong bonds with some of her best friends.

One of her fondest memories was watching Venezuelan children play baseball in the street with a homemade ball and broomstick.

These memories are why her favorite Astros players are the ones from Venezuela, especially José Altuve and Robinson Chirinos.

Conversing in both English and Spanish, Altuve and Clark talked about her time living in Venezuela and what it was like for Altuve growing up there.

She introduced him to some of her children in town for her birthday, and Altuve connected with his wife and daughter via a video call so they could wish Clark a happy birthday, as well.



Shirley Clark, who served more than 30 years as a missionary in Venezuela, enjoys a surprise visit from Jose Altuve of the Houston Astros. (Buckner Photo)

When their conversation turned to the Astros, Clark showed off her knowledge of player stats.

When asked what she credits as keys to longevity, Clark mentioned enjoying life, eating right and staying active—and getting out to the ballpark whenever possible.

Earlier in the year, Clark was one of 14 Buckner Parkway Place residents who posed for portraits as part of the community's new campaign, "Life,

Experienced.” The campaign captures the varied interests and passions of residents.

Naturally, Clark decked herself out in her Astros apparel and modeled in front of Minute Maid Park.