CHEHALIS
SCHOOL DISTRICT

the BAND
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FRIDAY CONNECT

Oct. 6, 2023

Booster Clubs Get Things Done For Students

When it comes to preparing every one of our students for the journey ahead, the Chehalis School District is fortunate to have many community partners who help us along the way. One of the ways many community members help create opportunities for students is through booster clubs, non-profit organizations that raise money for specific causes that might otherwise not be fully funded. This week, we take a look at some of the ways booster clubs give back to Chehalis students. "Our community is an integral part of our school system," said Chehalis Superintendent Dr. Christine Moloney. "The time, effort, dedication and resources parents and community members give to our students and programs is greatly appreciated and makes significant difference for our students. We are so thankful for their partnership in supporting our students."

TENINO
BEARCATS
GILL

Photo by Alec Dietz/The Chronicle

Activators Remove Hurdles for Middle School Sports

The Chehalis Activators, an athletic booster club supporting Chehalis Middle School has been around in some form for a long time, but the current club really got going in the 1970s with names like Ron Sorenson, John Eklund and Rick Hamilton at the helm. John Eklund's son, JT Eklund, said these men were just sports coaches and dads who realized that the cost of sports was too high for the school to do it on its own and were appreciative of what the Chehalis community did for them as youth athletes.

"I think all of our members want to give back what we all got out of the district when we were growing up," he said.

In the last 10 years, the Activators have given more than $150,000 in assistance to Chehalis Middle School athletes including: purchasing uniforms for all sports teams; upgrading football helmets when needed; purchasing and also building the bleachers at the middle school sports field; paying sports fees for students whose families cannot afford it; purchasing new wrestling mats with the assistance of Twin Cities Wrestling; and even paying for an additional coach's salary one year when a large number of student athletes turned out for a sport.

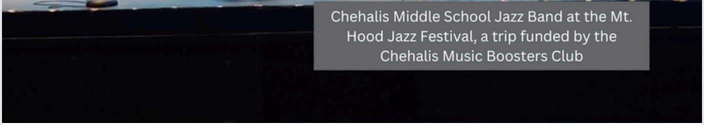
"We want to make sure there are no hurdles, no obstacles in the way for any kid who wants to do sports," Eklund said.

The Activators' primary fund-raisers are their golf tournament the Saturday after Mother's Day and their annual April track meet, which last year drew nearly 1,000 competitors from 23 schools, some that came from as far away as Canada. About $18,000 was raised between these two events last year.

Another Activators fund-raiser that is also a beloved sports experience for kids is the annual middle school football game. It will return Oct. 18 after being cancelled by both COVID (2020 and 2021) and wildfire smoke (2022). This totally volunteer run game allows middle school football players the opportunity to experience playing football on the big field of Bearcat Stadium, at night under the lights like high school players. Eklund serves each year as announcer for that event, taking special care to make it a special experience not just for players but also for their families.

"My job is to make sure every one of those players' names gets read at least once during that game," Eklund said. "It's for them and it's also for their parents. So, I'm really paying attention in the third and four quarters when those subs come in."

Mt. Hood
JAZZ
FESTIVAL



Chehalis Middle School Jazz Band at the Mt. Hood Jazz Festival, a trip funded by the Chehalis Music Boosters Club

Music Boosters Inspire Student Musicians

LIONEL
HAMPTON
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
LIONEL
HAMPTON
JAZZ
FESTIVAL

W.F. West Jazz Band members at Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival, a trip partially funded by Chehalis Music Boosters Club

Though some people still call them the band boosters, the Chehalis Music Boosters Club was founded in 1983 to benefit students in grades 6-12 participating in any Chehalis School District music program.

President Stacey Cummings joined in 2006 primarily because all four of her children have been involved in Chehalis music programs. But she said that she also chose to give her time to the booster club because she appreciates that while other districts have cut back on music and arts, Chehalis sees a value in it.

"Really, it's kind of remarkable and rare for a school district to honor music education so much," Cummings said of why she got involved in the club. "Music education starts in kindergarten here and my husband and I have always wanted to support that because it touches every kid in the district."

Chehalis Music Boosters Club Vice President Ceci Hauer has been involved since 2009 and has had all three of her kids involved in Chehalis music programs. She said she gives her time to the booster club because she believes the club's work removes some of the financial barriers that might otherwise keep kids from participating in music programs.

"Music education is so important and kids' access to music education is not just good for kids who want to go on to be music majors. It's good for every kid." Hauer said.

Each year, the Chehalis Music Boosters Club gives $1,500 in scholarships to graduating seniors who contributed to the Chehalis School District music program. During the school year, the club also pays for music opportunities for students such as: entry fees and travel expenses for Chehalis School District Music groups to attend regional festivals, where they get to learn and compete alongside other schools; covering all fees for students entering competitions such as the Southwest Washington Music Educator's Regional Solo & Ensemble competition and Junior All-State (at many other schools, students pay their own entry fees); and even helping music students travel to see performances by professional musicians. While students were learning from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chehalis Music Boosters also spent $20,000 to give all Chehalis music students access to a program that allowed them to stay connected with their classes and continue to learn.

"That was really neat to be able to do that," Cummings said.

Profoto
Softbox RFi 2x3'
13

Individual Sports Photographs Fundraiser by the W.F. West Bearcats Athletic Boosters last year.

Bearcat Boosters Give Teams a Leg Up

For the members of the W.F. West Bearcat Athletic Booster Club, their work is about making opportunities for high school athletes. President Angie Brumfield, who joined in 2014 and has stayed involved because all three of her kids have participated in sports, said her motivation is pretty similar to the many sports moms and "volun-told" dads who give their time to the club.

"Basically, I think athletics are really important for kids in high school and for life in general," Brumfield said. "Districts and teams don't always have the money to do everything they want to do, so if we as a parent group can come up with creative ways to raise money for those extra things, it can be a big help."

The Bearcat Athletic Boosters primarily raise money through their annual All-Sports Auction, which will be held this coming Saturday, Oct. 7. Each team that wishes to be included in the booster club's efforts can donate items to the auction and whatever those items auction for, the team gets that amount in a booster club account to use for items such as tournaments, camps, summer sports and equipment that may not be covered by their normal budgets. Last year's auction raised about $42,000 and each team that participated in the auction received between $250 and $5,000 in their booster club accounts.

The auction also includes items like a dessert auction and raise the paddle portion that benefit the club's scholarships. Last year, the club was able to give scholarships to 11 graduates (pictured in this newsletter's heading). Brumfield said they try to give as many scholarships as possible each year.

"Really, whoever applies, if you qualify, we try to give you some funds," she said.

Other fund-raising activities by the Bearcat Athletic Boosters include winter concessions during the W.F. West basketball season and a hamburger feed tailgate during the football season. Brumfield said all of these efforts have the same aim of giving all kids the opportunity to play.

"Really, it helps the kids and families not have to pay as much out of pocket," Brumfield said.

How Can YOU Help These Booster Clubs?

W.F. West Bearcat Athletic Booster Club
-Follow them on Facebook
-Come to the All-Sports Auction 5 p.m. Oct. 7 at the Lewis & Clark Event Center. Tickets for this adults-only event are $25 per person at the door.
-Buy concessions at any home basketball game.

Chehalis Activators
-Come to the Chehalis Activators Middle School Football versus Centralia game Wednesday, Oct. 18 at Bearcat Stadium. Kickoff for 7th graders is 6 p.m. and 8th grade kicks off at 7:30 p.m. Admission is $7 per family, $3 per adult, and $2 per student.
-Sign up to play in or volunteer at their annual golf tournament, held the Saturday after Mother's Day
-Volunteer to help at their annual track meet, held in the spring

Chehalis Music Boosters Club
-Follow them on Facebook
-Attend their annual membership meeting 6:30 p.m. Oct. 10 in the W.F. West Commons
-Purchase a poinsettia for $10-$50 from their annual poinsettia sale by talking to any music teacher, Chehalis music student in grades 6-12 or by messaging the club through Facebook.

Bearcats Come Home Oct. 13

Hey Bearcat Alumni, are you planning to come to the Homecoming football game 7 p.m. Oct. 13 at Bearcat Stadium? Make sure you stop by the Bearcat Connect alumni association's tent for treats and chance to win prizes.
Have you joined Bearcat Connect yet? This website is a place for W.F. West High School alumni of all generations to find former classmates, meet other Bearcats and be in the know about events and networking activities.

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Chehalis School District

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