

HOEDOWN: Event was a fundraiser for Rotary outreach

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Vito Bartolotta stepped up as a sponsor and offered Sisters Rotary Club their 20,000-square-foot indoor horse arena for the event.

“Their neighbors even offered us the use of their paddock for extra parking if needed for overflow of cars,” added Darcy.

The event is a bulk fundraiser for five organizations that collaborated together in the construction of the hoedown.

“The nonprofits are partnering with us in selling of the tickets for the event, and the building of the dance floor,” Darcy said. “They’ve all volunteered as a team to do all the cooking, serving and the set-up and tear-down. It’s a community effort.”

Hoyts Hardware & Building Supply donated a huge flatbed truck that was used as a stage for the country-western band Dry Canyon Stampede to perform on.

The four nonprofits invited to partner with Sisters Rotary for the event were Seed to Table, Harmony Farm Sanctuary, Central Oregon Veterans Ranch, and Sisters High School Interact Club. Each nonprofit had an information table and a color-coded silent auction table with items donated from businesses around Sisters.

The theme was a perfect fit for Sisters. Folks came

dressed casual in cowboy gear for the family-friendly event to have a foot stomping good time.

It was hotdogs, hamburgers, chickenburgers and fresh salads from Seed to Table for hungry cowgirls and cowboys. And for the thirsty, it was beer, wine, soft drinks and water.

For Mark and Jessica Madron from Sisters, it was a family affair. Tristen, the oldest child at 10, Holly, 9, and 7-year-old London were eating hotdogs and enjoying the music.

“I like it here because this is where I got to ride three horses,” Holly said.

Jessica Madron, employed at Bank of the Cascades, works with Yvette Chandler who is also the OHSET team advisor.

“Yvette has invited us out here many times to ride her horses,” Madron said.

Nearing 6 p.m. Master of Ceremonies Mike Bidasolo kicked off the hoedown by introducing Sisters Rotary Club President Rand Rietmann.

“This is a unique community that we live in, and we wanted to have a unique fundraiser,” Rietmann said. “Our desire is to give back to the community. That’s our goal and part of how we do that is through projects and service work.”

Some of the projects that Sisters Rotary Club completed this year include the Books for Kids project, the Rotary Youth Exchange, working at A Home To Share and sponsoring the SHS

Interact Club. Financially the club has helped high school scholarships, donations to SPRD, Camp Sunrise, and Ten Friends with their work in Nepal.

Rietmann invited the people representing the four nonprofits up on the flatbed truck for introductions.

Audrey Tehan, director of Seed to Table, educated the guests about the program. The Seed to Table Program was started in 2013 under the Sisters Science Club.

“Our program has morphed over the last couple of years and we now serve about 1,300 students a year. We are providing a lot of food for the food bank and the school lunches,” Tehan said. “We are excited to be able to receive more funding toward growing more food for the community.”

Ceili Cornelius is president of Sisters High School Interact Club, a branch of Rotary where high school students serve the community. Sisters Rotary Club first launched the Interact Club in Sisters High School in 2014.

“Our mission is to better our community and world by projects put on by our club. The funds we earn tonight allow us to execute projects in our school community and world,” said Cornelius.

Robine Bots represented Harmony Farm Sanctuary as the founder and director. Their mission is to rescue, rehabilitate, and provide an excellent home for unwanted



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Learning to line dance...

or abused animals. Harmony Farm Sanctuary also provides a unique opportunity for humans and animals to interact, heal and grow together.

“It all started with one little pig called Pig Floyd,” Bots said. “Our upcoming goal is to build a big pasture for the cattle we have rescued and eventually we want to build an obstacle course for people to walk the horses through as part of our therapy program.”

Alison Perry, director of Central Oregon Veterans Ranch, explained to guests that the ranch is a new model of healthcare for veterans in Central Oregon.

“We are a 19-acre working ranch that restores purpose and spirit for veterans of all ages. We are a sanctuary for

veterans of all generations.”

Line dancing got underway as the 6-piece band began their toe-tapping country-western performance. Eighteen-month-old Virginia Catherine Jones of Sisters, sporting Western boots, stole the show with her tiny foot-stomping performance across the dance floor.

After a little food, a little dancing and a lot of fun, folks got ready for the live auction with professional auctioneer Romey Bromich. Each nonprofit donated two items that were up for bidding.

Each event ticket that was purchased had a chance at the grand prize drawing. Five local restaurants donated gift certificates, aptly named “The Taste of Sisters.”

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