

# SMS students ‘Ping It On!’

By Erin Borla  
Correspondent

Sisters Middle School students have a new afterschool activity they can participate in this winter: ping pong. Propelled by language arts teacher Becky Aylor, students in grades 5-8 are invited to “Ping It On” two days a week after school.

Aylor has five 4-by-8-foot particle boards that are painted and striped along with retractable nets, ping pong balls and 30 paddles thanks to community donations and from businesses like Hoyt’s Hardware. Each of the makeshift tables rest on the cafeteria tables in the commons.

“After the bell rings, students are provided with a small snack, and a few help set up the tables,” said Aylor. “Then students scatter to the tables for 10 minutes of warm-up and hitting the ball back and forth, then we head into ‘Ping-It-On’ time.”

The rules for Ping-It-On require five people to play and six is ideal. Four students are at each table with paddles and two are on deck ready to slide in after the ball is hit on that side.

Just before each server serves they say, “ping it!” and the other three in the game say “on!” This way the whole table knows that the ball will be in play. Once the server hits the ball over the net the player next to them takes off around the table to get “on deck.” The server picks up their paddle as the opposing side returns their first hit. The on-deck person slides into the server position and everyone has rotated one position to the left.

“Each time the ball is hit on your side of the net you shift one position over,” said Aylor. “You can’t take the paddle with you. The goal is to keep the ball in play with your team of five or six. Twenty-three hits was our record on day one!”

Every 10 minutes students are rotated so they get an opportunity to meet other students and mix up the ability level.

Ping It On currently has 20 students involved and runs Mondays and Wednesdays in December and January on days when students are in school.

Aylor developed a similar after-school program in the fall called Take A Hike.

“My purpose in creating this after-school activity was for me to get up and away from my desk to get active a couple days a week,” she said. “I can blow off the gym or my home treadmill — but I can’t say no to these awesome students who aren’t already involved in other activities or hobbies wanting to also do something fun and

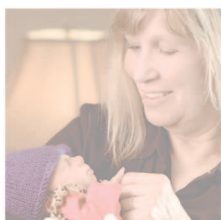
inexpensive after school.” There is still time to sign up for Ping It On; the cost is \$10 — to help pay for snacks — and parents or guardians need to email Aylor at [becky.aylor@sisters.k12.or.us](mailto:becky.aylor@sisters.k12.or.us) to register.

Aylor hopes to plan another after-school activity in the spring, potentially on the Peterson Ridge Trail.



PHOTO BY BECKY AYLOR

Ping pong keeps 'em happy and occupied.



Community in the Park

“ St. Charles is a valuable partner to us. They support our event in multiple ways and serve side-by-side with us.”

~Gary Buss, Community in the Park organizer

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To change those statistics for the better, Faith Based Network started Community in the Park – a one-day event where dental exams, haircuts, clothes, blood pressure and blood sugar checks, auto and bike repair, car washes and more are all offered at no charge.

Whether discovering someone is pre-diabetic and connecting that person to health services or fixing a neighbor’s car so he or she can get to work, the volunteers make a difference. Community in the Park is all about meeting practical and critical needs, providing support, having fun and, most of all, connecting with one another.

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