

HOEDOWN: Event raised funds for multiple nonprofits

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little cowgirls made their way to the dance floor. Two-year-old Mai and her sister, 5-year-old Aila, did their own version of the two-step with mom Kari, while dad Sam Monte cheered them on from the table.

Sam Monte is the flight instructor for Outlaw Aviation at the Sisters Airport, and is a graduate of the COCC Aviation Department.

“The students from the SHS Flight Science class that are really interested in flying come directly to us at the Sisters Eagle Airport for instruction,” Monte told *The Nugget*.

Sheryl Yeager, a certified flight instructor who teaches the Flight Science class at SHS was helping some of her students at the desert table. The 10 students shared the responsibility of manning the Flight Science program table and selling desserts made by Sisters Bakery.

“I am doing everything I can to get these kids their private pilot’s license before they graduate high school,” Yeager said. “It’s expensive for the students to get flight time and we’re so grateful to

have been invited here. We do as much fundraising as we can, and I like to see them work for it.”

Hungry guests lined up for burgers, hot dogs, salads made by Seed to Table, and desserts, while others bid on auction items and entered the beer and wine raffle.

Harmony Farm Sanctuary brought along the entire family, including a few of the furry and feathered kind.

“We are very grateful that Rotary asked us to be part of the Hoedown this year. The animals that we have brought with us are representatives from our farm,” said 12-year-old Marieke Jeffrey, daughter of Robine Bots, founder of the nonprofit.

Just after 7 p.m. Rotarian Hal Darcy took the stage and introduced the four nonprofits that partnered with Sisters Rotary. Each organization had one live auction item up for purchase by any of the guests who wanted to bid.

Circle of Friends Executive Director Nicky Merritt introduced herself and educated the guests about the organization.

“We work with great mentors and we match them up with kids in our community that need exposure to new opportunities that can help them spark a passion in their life.”

The acting auctioneer for

Circle of Friends was Jack McGowan, a longtime supporter of the nonprofit.

“We’ve got amazing nonprofits here tonight that need your help. I’m representing Circle of Friends. Circle of Friends is not a regular nonprofit, we have mentors that dedicate up to 12 years of their life to mentor young people to get them on the right path to citizenship, responsibility to their community, respect for one another which is needed in today’s world.”

McGowan also quoted Tom McCall, a former Oregon Governor.

“Heroes are not giant statues framed against a red sky. They are people who say this is my community and it’s my responsibility to make it better.”

Robine Bots represented Harmony Farm Sanctuary as the founder and director.

“HFS started in 2014,



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Robine Bots’ daughter, Marieke Jeffrey, showing off some Harmony Farm Sanctuary baby turkeys.

and our mission is twofold,” she said. “We are a rescue and rehabilitation center for abused and neglected and unwanted farm animals, and secondly we strive to build community by inviting

people of all ages, especially those with special needs or difficult life circumstances, to come visit the animals, volunteer their efforts or participate in our mindfulness-based programs.”

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