

Outlaws football hosts Daddy Daughter Dance

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

The second annual Daddy Daughter Dance was held on Saturday, May 12, in the commons at Sisters High School, and drew rave reviews from the participants for the second year in a row.

One hundred and eighty dads, grandpas, uncles, brothers, friends, moms and young ladies attended the event and were met at the door by Outlaw football players and parent volunteers Sue Wessel and Lisa King. The football players greeted everyone as they entered with a handshake, eye contact, and a smile on their face.

Head Football Coach Neil Fendall said, "It's good practice for these boys to look another person eye-to-eye, and shake hands like a gentleman. It's something we want to emphasize as a contrast to their heads down and eyes buried in their phones."

After guests checked in, they were encouraged to get their picture taken by volunteer photographer Craig May, and photos were uploaded to a website for a free download.

Last year the event included dessert, but this year they ramped it up; the dance nearly doubled in participants, and included a catered pasta dinner by Bowtie Catering Company. A full dessert table was also included, as well as the highly anticipated chocolate fountain.

Girls were eager to dance, and barely gave their dates time to finish their dinner. Dads and daughters soon were dancing, and enjoyed a beautiful evening together, filled with smiles and laughter, and memories that will last a lifetime.

When asked how the second year compared to the first, high school teacher Dan O'Neill said, "It's better in every way ... our favorite night of the year."

Ava, O'Neill's daughter said, "I'll be back every year, even when I'm in college."

Alumni Pat Burke brought his daughter Emma, who alternated dancing with games of chase around the commons.

Burke stated, "It was a great turnout. The girls all looked like they were having fun."

Wyatt Hernandez provided his volunteer DJ services, and took requests from the crowd.

At the close of the evening, many of the young dancers were completely worn out and were carried out the door in the arms of their chivalrous dates. Then, the football team huddled up and were given instructions for cleanup and breakdown.

Fendall reiterated the additional purpose of the event, other than being a fun night for the girls: "We want to teach our players how to respect and honor women. There are too many ugly stories involving athletes and the

sports culture when it comes down to men and women. We want to make sure our boys don't behave like some of the guys you see on the news. What better example of how to treat a lady than the way a dad treats his daughter?"

Fendall made sure he deflected any credit and thanks for hosting the event.

"I'm just the guy you see on the microphone," said Fendall. "The one deserving of thanks is Lynne (Fendall) and the other moms that helped her out."

Lynne shared with *The Nugget* that the whole concept of a Daddy Daughter Dance came about shortly after Neil was hired as the head football coach in 2016.

"We were trying to find a unique fundraising opportunity that also gave something back to the community," said Lynne. "We were in the car brain-storming, when I saw a sign for a father daughter dance, and I said to Neil, 'Why don't we do that?'"

The whole idea came to fruition, and the first Daddy Daughter Dance was held in May of 2017, but was for preschool through middle school age girls only.

It was quickly determined that girls of all ages wanted to attend, so this year there were no age-limit restrictions.

Lynne said, "The biggest thing was that we wanted to make sure it was all-inclusive. For example, if a girl didn't have a dad, her grandpa,



PHOTO PROVIDED

Dads and daughters cut the rug in support of Outlaws football last week.

uncle, brother, or even her mom could bring her.

"It's a special event for our community," added Lynne. "It's not really meant to be a big fundraiser. We just want everyone to participate and enjoy themselves, while keeping the price reasonable. We want this to become

a tradition, and we want the word to spread that everyone is welcome. We trust our community will always lend a hand to make sure every girl is invited who wants to come. We've even talked about opening this up to moms and sons! Boys of Sisters — consider yourself warned!"

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