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Blarneystone

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ties and even a 100 dollar bill patrons have donated, the strange decor is becoming more profitable all the time.

But at 7:30 a.m. today McLaverty will be sweeping down the "magically" suspended currency to be donated in full to the Emerald Valley Special Olympics program. In addition, the establishment's owner, Patty McCall, will match dollar for dollar the amount collected toward the donation.

This is only one in a series of fund-raising events the Irish-themed bar near the Lane Community College campus has teamed up with local charities to host. Choosing the Special Olympics for this project was a simple choice for McLaverty, who performed similar magic for kids groups in Corvallis last year as manager of Kells Irish Restaurant and Pub.

"I guess I have a soft spot for the kids," he said. "We sponsored a golf tournament last year too, and that was a lot of fun."

This single donation is only the kick-off, however, for an even more generous gesture by the Blarneystone, as it will also donate a portion of all proceeds from its two-day St. Patrick's Day festival celebration March 17 and 18.

The festival will feature several bands, Irish dancers, performance pieces from LCC students and five different Irish beers as well as some rousing bagpipe music from the Highland pipers. Advance tickets for the "Eugene Irish Festival" can be purchased through Ticketmaster or the restaurant itself, and McLaverty promises they will be worth every cent.

As public relations intern for Special Olympics, Julirose Schafgans helped organize the fund-raising activities with McLaverty, and she said the money will be used for equipment, uniforms, practice space rentals and travel expenses. More than 700 individuals benefit from the Emerald Valley program that serves Lane, Linn and Benton counties. Special Olympics in Oregon boasts some 5,000 participant athletes statewide.

"We rely on donations such as these in order to provide sports activities year-round," Schafgans said.

Sports Coordinator Donna Ayres said a recent tournament trip to Ashland in which 14 basketball teams played cost more than $8,000 in transportation and lodging alone.

"When a community business says it will do something like this it makes it so much easier because we have to pound the pavement for every dollar we get," Ayres said. "We couldn't exist without it."

Nutrition

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on a protein diet!' or 'carbohydrates are bad!,'" she said. "It's really a challenging time to be dietitian because it's so hard to fight all the misinformation."

There's no debate in the medical community that these diets will initially help a person lose weight, but keeping it off for the long haul is another matter.

"People can lose weight on them," Fahlstrom said. "It takes away the food group that people have a hard time controlling — the carbohydrates."

She said, however, that the weight that's lost is water weight, which is easily regained.

"If people need to lose weight, they have to learn to make changes in their eating habits," Fahlstrom said. "High-protein diets don't tend to promote that."

Kristen Olmos, a health educator in the University Health Center, said there are some potential long-term health risks associated with following the high-protein diets, such as kidney problems and a higher risk of osteoporosis. And because the diets promote eating many foods that are high in cholesterol, following it could raise a dieter's risk of some heart-related diseases, Olmos said.

"Most of those diets are up to 50 percent fat, so it's almost better to call them 'high-fat diets,'" Olmos said. "It's been well-documented that following those diets can lead to cardiovascular disease."

Olmos listed several fad diets, including The Zone, Sugarbusters and Dr. Atkins' New Diet Revolution, which she said all promoted unhealthy diet ratios of carbohydrates, fats and protein. Carbohydrates are the muscle's preferred source of energy, she said, and the only source of energy for your brain.

The major concern with the high-protein diets is that though the diet has been around for years in various forms, there haven't been any long-term studies on its effects, said Dr. Gerald Fleischli, UHC director.

"It's been around for awhile in popular books, but no formal scientific studies have been done," he said. Authors can sell books about their hypotheses, but the Food and Drug Administration doesn't have the authority to monitor the accuracy of the diet books, he said.

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