

Vernonia Boosters

By Scott Laird

"We're here to help the kids!"

That's what it's all about for the Vernonia Boosters--the kids. Oh yes, and some fun and socializing thrown in for good measure.



"We wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't fun," said Booster President Herb Huson.

That was the message that came across when I stopped by to visit with the Boosters during a recent work party at Greenman Field at the Vernonia High School

as the Boosters prepared for the first home football game of the season in early September. A small group of dedicated volunteers were working to clean up the bleachers and get the snack shack ready inside and out. And although this group was definitely having a good time together, there was a small problem. There were only five of them.

"We just have to do this," said Huson. "I don't understand why this is such a struggle."

The Vernonia Boosters are in search of some more volunteers. They are especially looking for parents of students in the school district willing to give a couple of hours every few months. "During the games we get lots of participation, and that's great," said Huson. "We really need more help during these work parties. It all goes so much faster when there are fifteen or twenty people instead of five or six."

The Vernonia Boosters run the snack shack at games, raising money for scholarships for students. They also help student athletes that need financial assistance with anything from required physicals to equipment. They help with award banquets, and they act as the umbrella non-profit for community sports and other programs, allowing them to function and handling financial accounting for them.

"We help the Vernonia Soccer Club, Little Guy Football, Youth Baseball, Youth Softball, and Tee-ball," said volunteer Marla Rethwell. In other words, if your kid plays an organized sport in Vernonia, the Boosters are helping make it happen.

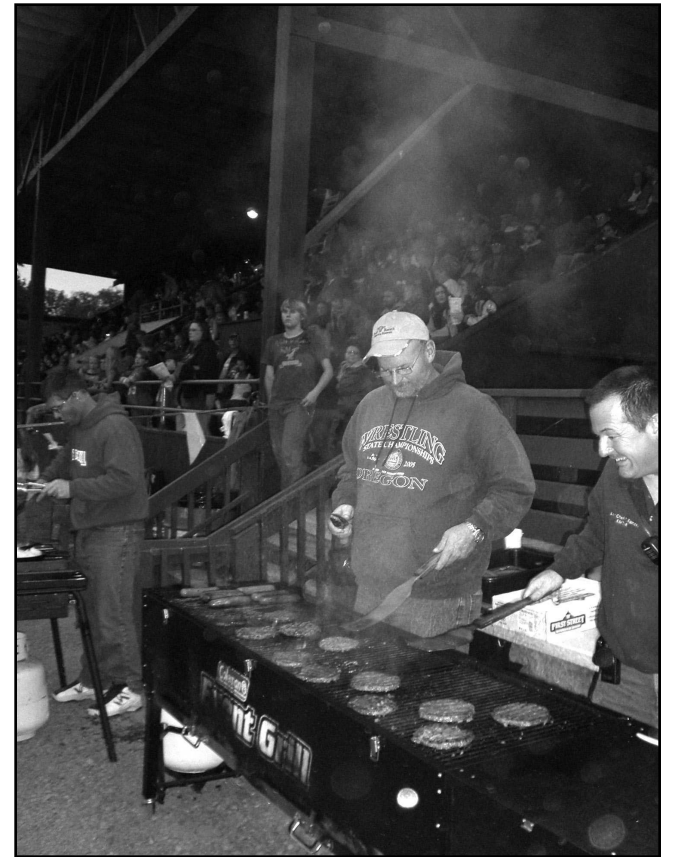
And it's not just sports they support. They help sponsor the Echoing Evergreen Summer Day Camp. They've also given out two \$500 scholarships each year for senior student athletes, one each for a male and female. This past year the Boosters added two more scholarships for students who participate in other scholastic activities.



One thing the Vernonia Boosters can be especially proud of is the Snack Shack at the stadium. The building has been a labor of love for a number of years, and is finally nearing completion. Though functional last season, there are some finishing touches that were being applied before the start of this season.

"Previous Boosters had raised \$24,000 to build the building, and that fundraising effort had exhausted them," said Rethwell. "The funds would have gone back into the school general fund if we hadn't started construction. By the time construction was underway, we didn't have enough money to complete it, so we were left with a shell. We received some fixtures from the Washington Grade school cafeteria, donations of cider blocks, help from the city and West Oregon Electric installing utilities, and now we're just finishing some cosmetics."

"This is such an excellent representation of the community of Vernonia," said Huson. "It's really something we can be proud of. No other school this size has this kind of set up."



"I love being a Booster!" said Shelly Huson, Herb's wife and also a dedicated volunteer. "I love the social aspect, helping the kids, presenting the scholarships. We pick up where the school system leaves off."

"I have made so many friendships through this group," said Herb. "The games are such a social event in this community. Even people who don't have kids will travel to watch the away games. It's really nice to see so many people interested. I just wish we could get more of them to take that first step and get more involved."

The Vernonia Boosters will be pitching in to help with the Dean Schaumburg fundraising effort by donating 50% of their concession receipts from the Homecoming Football game on October 19.

To volunteer, contact Herb or Shelly Huson at (503) 429-3300 or Marla Rethwell at (503) 429-2031.

Washington Grade School Launches Box Tops Fundraiser

Washington Grade School has recently launched their 2007-2008 Box Tops for Education fundraising campaign. This year the school has set a goal of earning \$400 through Box Tops to purchase P.E. equipment and school supplies.



Box Tops for Education is a school fundraising program started by General Mills in 1996. To date, Box Tops has helped America's schools raise over \$200 million to buy the things they need but can't always afford, such as library books, school supplies and playground equipment. The Box Tops for Education program offers school supporters three easy ways to earn cash for schools through everyday activities like buying groceries, shopping online and purchasing books. Schools can earn a total of up to \$60,000 each year.



If you'd like to help the students at Washington Grade School reach their goal to buy P.E. equipment and school supplies, there are several easy ways to get involved. Collect Box Tops from hundreds of familiar, participating products and send them to Washington Grade School, "Attention Mr. Spaulding - Box Tops Coordinator" at 199 Bridge Street Vernonia, OR. 97064. You can also sign up on the Box Tops website at boxtops4education.com. Designate Washington Grade School as the school you wish to support. At the Box Tops website, you'll learn more about all of the easy ways you can choose to make a difference -- all at no additional cost to you.