

Athletes claw their way to the top

Community crab dinner boosts Ilwaco High School sports

By KATHERINE LACAZE
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Fine coastal dining gets a philanthropic twist Saturday, Jan. 19, when the Ilwaco Sports Boosters serve up a crab dinner for the community. The proceeds support Ilwaco High School's athletic programs.

"All of us believe strongly that sports are one of the things students can be involved in, and it really makes a difference in their lives," longtime sports boosters member Mary Goelz said. "Everyone supports positive youth activities that happen in the county."

From noon to 7 p.m., the public can visit the Long Beach Elks Lodge and enjoy a crab dinner, complete with coleslaw and French bread, for \$18. Hot dogs are also available for \$3. Beer, wine and non-alcoholic beverages are available for purchase.

IF YOU GO

Ilwaco Sports Boosters Community Crab Feed

When: Noon to 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 19

Where: Long Beach Elks Lodge, 110 Pacific Highway North

The purpose of the sports boosters, according to organization president David Glasson, is to supplement the school's budget and purchase those things for the sports clubs that are "above and beyond," such as a timing system for the track and field program; a pitching machine; a rebounding machine; workout gear; and lodging during away games. These items, Goelz added, help the teams "be more successful and do the things they want to do." The group will occasionally work alongside other nonprofit organizations for grants or matching funds, leveraging "everything we can," Glasson said.

Ilwaco High School Principal David

Tobin said the school is "beyond grateful for the time, effort, opportunity, and service" the boosters contribute.

"They do so much and are willing to help provide a great experience for our coaches and athletes," he added.

The sports boosters also provide several thousand dollars in scholarships to six to eight graduating seniors each school year. In addition, they do larger projects that benefit the school in a broader way, such as upgrading the sound system on the football field, which is also used by the track team and for community events.

Currently, they have their eye on restoring the concession stand at the stadium, which has fallen into disrepair and been unusable for many years. The goal is to have the facility revitalized and operational by spring.

Coaches can request funding when a special need arises. They also earn funds, so to speak, by volunteering with the sports boosters in various ways, such as running a concession stand during baseball tournaments. At the crab feed, several sports teams and clubs help with setting up, running the event

and tearing down to make money for their individual programs.

When students participate, along with a few dozen other volunteers, it creates a strong atmosphere of community and camaraderie at the fundraiser, Glasson said. The fundraiser also receives critical support from the crabbers who are generous in donating a part of their bounty to serve the community. Organizers shoot for having about 1,200 pounds of crab on hand for the feed. Depending on a number of factors — such as the success of the crabbing season and the price of crab — the crabbers "give what they can," decreasing the amount the boosters have to purchase, Glasson said.

"You might get donations for 600 pounds, you might get donations for 1,200 pounds," he said.

Throughout the day, the fundraiser generally draws a couple hundred attendees, who can come and go as they please, Goelz said. Even some groups from outside the community bus in together to attend.

"It is a great social event for the community and the menu is fabulous," Tobin said. 

