

BUY
PHOTO
REPRINTS
ONLINE

SUBSCRIBE TO
THE GAZETTE
ONLINE
OR IN PRINT

GAZETTENET.com

Amherst Bulletin The Recorder Valley Advocate Pioneer Valley Many Hands Hampshire Life

Sign out Account Trouble finding something? Contact us Classifieds

Daily Hampshire Gazette - Established 1786

news search

Local News State/Region U.S./World Obituaries Sports Business Schools Colleges Politics Opinion Entertainment Health Living Sci/Tech

Team effort

NHS sports advocates launch booster program

By CATHERINE BAUM
Staff Writer

Email this page Printer-friendly version

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

NORTHAMPTON - Last spring, Northampton High School students and parents learned budget constraints threatened school sports and might force the district to cut some sports entirely.

When city voters approved a Proposition 2½ property tax override, which included \$1 million for the public schools, those cuts didn't take place as feared. Sports advocates breathed a sigh of relief.

"That was huge," said Northampton High School Principal Nancy Athas.

But the writing was on the wall. Sports advocates knew that scenario could play out again. Threats to a stable sports program began to bother parents and others who support high school athletics, which, they say, is about much more than winning a game.

"I think sports is a huge piece that keeps kids involved in school," Athas said. "For some, it's their link to academic achievement. It teaches students about leadership, about how to get along with people, setting priorities, achieving academic excellence ... and it's healthy."

More than half of the high school's students are participating athletes. Sports boosters wanted to create a solid financial base on which to build programs for those 425 students and others like them.

Born this school year is the Northampton Booster Club, a nonprofit organization that raises money to benefit all of Northampton High School's sport teams. Student athletes, parents and coaches will host a line-up of fundraising activities this year - from cow plop contests to Guitar Hero tournaments. Proceeds will serve as a safety net for Northampton school sports in the future.

"We didn't want to go through another year like we did last year," Athas said. "Your budget is always in flux; you never know where you're going to be."

In its first year, the club will focus solely on fundraising, starting with the new "T'Day for tomorrow" campaign. "T'Day" stands for "Thirty Dollars a Year" to join the Hamp T'Day Booster Club.

On Oct. 17 and Oct. 24, student athletes will knock on doors to solicit \$30 yearly membership donations from city residents to join the Hamp T'Day Booster Club. The goal is to raise \$15,000 to \$18,000, according to Jim Miller, the high school's director of athletics.

In its first year, the club aims to raise \$50,000 to \$80,000.



JERREY ROBERTS

Northampton High School Athletic Director Jim Miller stands near the sideline during a recent boys soccer game against Minnechaug. He and other sports advocates have launched a new fundraising venture to support athletics at the school.



UMassULearn.net
Open new doors...
Online and On Campus
UMassAmherst
Continuing & Professional Education

Popular stories

- Three are treated after head-on Whately collision
- One car hits couple in 2 vehicles
- Dog to be euthanized
- Laurie Loisel: A crash that kept on taking
- Gazette switch ends era of youth carriers

Down the road with a budget in hand, the boosters group will fund sports transportation, scrimmages, invitational competitions, equipment and new uniforms, said Miller.

The club will be overseen by a board that includes parent representatives, coaches and a community member, along with Miller as a non-voting member.

Members of Hamp T'Day will be asked to contribute annually to Northampton High School athletics and in return will receive a unique, numbered window sticker to display on a car or house, as well as access to sports programs and athlete information.

Late-spring mailings and emails to all members will follow, with the hope of new members joining each year. Organizers hope to enlist 3,000 to 4,000 members over the next few years.

Members can use their Hamp T'Day receipt for admission to a sporting event during the annual Booster Week, which features a powder puff football game, cow plop contest and a community carnival.

Returning to Booster Week after a 17-year hiatus, cow plop is a contest in which participants buy rights to a plot of land for \$10 on the athletic field, betting the cow will do its business on that plot. The winning guesser gets \$1,000, with \$100 awarded the person who guessed the plot closest to the correct one.

Part of the rationale behind the Hamp T'Day campaign is to broaden the base of athletics supporters. In addition to user fees ranging from \$150 for an athlete to \$600 for a family per season (excluding student athletes on free and reduced lunch), parents fork out for individual team booster clubs, game tickets and city taxes, which fund coach stipends. Parents are typically customers at car wash and bake sales, too.

"We're hitting the same people over and over again," said James Clayton Jr., a cross country, indoor track and track coach who, along with fellow coach Perry Messer, has been guiding the club's creation. "We've been underfinanced for 15 or 16 years. We're trying to put it all under one roof."

All told, the school department funds 35 percent of the athletics budget, while the remaining 65 percent comes from the participants' and supporters' pockets.

The club's long-term goal is to do away with user fees, a move organizers believe would allow more students to participate in sports.

And that is no small thing. Athas says there is a direct correlation between the number of athletes in school and the strength of the school community.

For more information, visit HampHigh.org.

Catherine Baum can be reached at cbaum@gazettenet.com.

Filed Under: [local](#) [news](#) [northampton](#) [schools](#) [sports](#)

Comments

Tue, 10/06/2009 - 14:02 — [Merlin](#)

Merlin

Where did Booster Day go as celebrated in the sixties with a parade, rallies and a bomb fire where proceeds were put toward the lighting of the field?

▪ [reply](#)

Tue, 10/06/2009 - 10:32 — [screamer04](#)

Numbers of athletes are off somewhere

Article says: "More than half of the high school's students are participating athletes. Sports boosters wanted to create a solid financial base on which to build programs for those 425 students and others like them." Accompanying chart says Northampton has 282 athletes. ???

▪ [reply](#)

Tue, 10/06/2009 - 13:44 — Catherine Baum

The article says Northampton

The article says Northampton High School has 425 athletes total (all seasons). The chart compares the number of fall athletes in Northampton, 282, to the number of fall athletes in other high schools.

▪ [edit](#) ▪ [reply](#)

Tue, 10/06/2009 - 09:26 — NIEclassroom

Upcoming comedy Night fundraiser

One of the events not mentioned will be a comedy Night featuring 2 comedians that are on the Las Vegas scene, Jim Colliton and Steve Bjork.

This will be Friday Nov. 6 at 7pm in the H.S. auditorium. Tickets are \$20 each. Contact the Athletic Directors office for more info on how to get tickets.

▪ [reply](#)

Post new comment

Your name:

[Catherine Baum](#)

Subject:

Comment: *

Input format

Filtered HTML

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
 - Allowed HTML tags: <a> <i> <code> <cite> <div>
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

Full HTML

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

unfiltered HTML

[More information about formatting options](#)



[Local News](#) | [State/Region](#) | [U.S./World](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Schools](#) | [Colleges](#) | [Politics](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Health](#) | [Living](#) | [Sci/Tech](#) | [Blogs](#)

[Copyright Notice](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help Center](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Subscribe to the Gazette](#) | [Advertising](#)

Daily Hampshire Gazette © 2008 All rights reserved