

Challenge accepted: Go Bengals!

Written by By Melinda Sanchez Sun Correspondent
Friday, 10 April 2015 00:00



Students raise money to fight cancer

A man told me, “You won’t be able to get high school students to do anything,” said Team Bengals sponsor Pam Yardley.

That was the challenge that created the drive in the volunteer group. Team Bengals is a Relay For Life team that is comprised of more than 20 students from Gallup High School.

Last year, Team Bengals was the number two money maker for the cancer-fundraising events network. That was the most rewarding part of the year for team member Loisse Ledres, when she realized her team was able to raise over \$4,000 for the American Cancer Society’s signature fundraising event, she said.

Last year’s benefit events included a staff versus youth volleyball game and a talent show that featured students from all area schools. They also partnered with Denny’s on Hwy. 491.

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Denny's allows the youth group to help serve meals and donate the tips they collect to the global fundraiser. The restaurant also donates a portion of each meal sold to the event. Team Bengals will be serving meals at Denny's on April 11-12, from 3 pm to 6 pm each day.

Relay For Life is not the only event at which the students participate. They also cook and serve meals at Care 66. The Care 66 partnership is the one student and Bengals teammate Karolyn King finds most rewarding.

The students sell root beer floats and have bake sales to pay for the groceries used for the Care 66 project. King said everything is made from scratch and Yardley makes sure of that. It takes the group from two to three hours to complete the work, from meal prep to clean up, King said. The residents are very appreciative.

Most of the students on Team Bengals are members of the high school's Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) club. Their chapter has made movie trailers about alcohol abuse and prescription drug abuse, among warnings against other harmful substances. The trailers have been shown at Allen Theatres in Gallup.

Many of the students are also involved with MESA (Math, Engineering, Science, Achievement), and drama, sports and art. Team Bengal member Loisse Ledres said she would describe the group as "a bunch of random kids."

Ledres and King are both seniors this year and have become close friends. Ledres is the recipient of a Presidential Scholarship from UNM and King is a Gates Millennium Scholarship finalist. The seniors have recruited underclassmen to carry on the Team Bengal tradition.

"We are a close knit community, almost a family," Ledres said.

Loisse said she wants to call out other youth to serve the community as well because she has found volunteering to be very rewarding and hopes others can be inspired by seeing what this group has accomplished.

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