

Boyer Valley PTO continues growing impact

DUNLAP — Within a mere two years of its formation, the Boyer Valley Parent-Teacher Organization has become a visible and active force in the school district, combining community-building events with hands-on support for students and staff.

Founded in the spring of 2024, the Boyer Valley PTO is led by Bridgit Jolkowski, Vice President Kim Mueller, Secretary Megan Hanigan and Treasurer Cheyenne Baldwin. The group was created to strengthen connections between families, staff and the broader community while providing additional resources for students.

In a short period of time, the PTO has organized a wide range of initiatives addressing both practical needs and enrichment opportunities. A seasonal winter glove, mitten and hat drive helped ensure students had warm clothing. These items were collected at drop boxes placed inside the school and Smitty's Grocery, and then delivered to the Boyer Valley elementary for distribution as needed.

For the current school year, the PTO assembled and distributed school supply bags to support families at the start of the school year. These bags included all items mentioned on the annual school supply list and were delivered directory to students' classrooms to be available to them at the school's Open House.

The organization has also played a role in supporting literacy and learning, helping coordinate more than 50 local readers for the elementary school's Guest Readers program.

The group also committed to funding a county conservation program that brings hands-on environmental education directly into elementary classrooms.

Student well-being has been another priority. The PTO funded an anti-bullying assembly for elementary students. Here is what a representative of Boyer Valley Community Schools had to say about the event: "The assembly highlighted the importance of staying healthy, respecting yourself and others, being responsible, setting goals, never giving up, and standing up against bullying. The students were fully engaged, singing and dancing their way through, feeling inspired and empowered.

We truly appreciate the Boyer Valley PTO's ongoing support in offering meaningful experiences that help develop our students into kind, confident, and responsible individuals."

Representatives of the PTO also worked to place free feminine hygiene products in middle school and high school bathrooms, capitalizing on the resources and efforts of a non-profit organization called "Love for Red."

Welcome bags have been prepared for new students entering the district, helping families feel connected from their first days at Boyer Valley. These bags are filled with gift certificates, trinkets, product samples, and other items donated by Dunlap and Dow City businesses. As part of this effort, each new student to the district receives a free Boyer Valley t-shirt donated by Graphix.

"Our goal has always been to support students in meaningful, practical ways. Whether it's meeting basic needs or providing enrichment opportunities, we want families and staff to know the PTO is here to help students succeed and feel supported at school," Jolkowski said.

Teachers and staff have also been a focus of the group's efforts. PTO members have organized meals for educators during parent-teacher conferences and open house events, coordinated teacher appreciation gifts, and prepared welcome gifts for teachers new to the district.

Beyond the school walls, the PTO has made a point to stay visible in the community. Members participated in the homecoming parade, tossing out Bulldog-themed items, and regularly support school spirit initiatives throughout the year.

Fundraising has played a key role in sustaining these efforts. In addition to Trivia Night, the PTO hosted their first Halloween-themed Ride Around Town hayrack ride in October. They had three hayracks full of participants. Participants loaded the hayracks at the Lower Bar, stopped at three host houses along their route for drinks and snacks, visited the Dunlap Golf Course for costume judging and wrapped the evening up at the Dog House Bar & Grill for live music.

The PTO also sold cotton candy at several home football games. Leaders say offering a variety of fundraisers helps keep events accessible and fun for families of all ages.

"The PTO has been able to do so much in a short amount of time because of the support from families and the community. From classroom programs to events like Trivia Night, that participation helps us continue supporting students and staff, and we welcome anyone who wants to be part of it," Jolkowski said.

As the PTO looks ahead, officers say they are encouraged by the level of support and participation seen during their first year and hope to continue expanding both programming and involvement.