



AIA FEATURE STORY By: Don Ketchum

WRESTLING BENEFIT FOR CANCER IS VALUABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

PHOENIX, AZ (January 10, 2008) – Wrestlers at Queen Creek Canyon State Academy and those from surrounding environs recently learned the value of community service in a multi-dual meet that raised funds to battle cancer.

“Taking Down Cancer” was the theme of the 11-team event on Dec. 31, and about \$2,500 was raised, according to Canyon State athletic director Jay Reichenberger.

He said Canyon State wrestling coach Dave Nelson was instrumental in organizing event. Nelson’s wife, Laurie, is a cancer survivor, Reichenberger said.

There has been a Relay for Life event in the Queen Creek area for about four years, Reichenberger said, and this event was an extension of that.

Five officials donated their earnings from working event to fighting the cancer cause. That figure was close to \$1,000, Reichenberger said.

The officials were Robin Henderson, Charlie Jones, Drew Hays, Ted Taylor and Shawn Cazaric. Henderson worked all day with few breaks.

“Wrestling is not an easy sport to officiate, and for them to do what they did to help us out, we can’t say enough about that,” Reichenberger said.

Cassandra McCray, Canyon State’s Director of Community Affairs, said Phoenix Bourgade Catholic donated an additional \$100 and Phoenix Valley Lutheran donated an additional \$50.

“We are very appreciative of that,” she said.

The fact that the event occurred between the Christmas and New Year’s holidays probably made it difficult for some parents and fans to attend, “but those who came did a great job. It’s a tribute to them,” Reichenberger said. “Most everyone who came through, when they learned what the money would go to, chipped in a few extra dollars.”

He hopes that the event will continue next season.

Being involved in such things is part of the learning experience for student-athletes, according to McCray.

“That’s what we want to do, to try to make sure that all young people are taught to give back to the community,” she said. “We need to be giving in a positive manner without worrying so much about receiving. We think we are on the right track.”

Have a Story Idea:

The AIA is looking for story ideas on member high schools, including its student-athlete, coaches and administrators. Have a story that you think should be shared with the AIA community? Email your idea to Don Ketchum at dketchum@aiaonline.org.