

Dicus Foundation Takes Another Big Step

Written by Mike Kelly

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Give Marty Lambert and Patti Turner an "A" for effort. Those two have backboned the Will Dicus Foundation the last three years. And in that short span of time, they have amassed nearly \$50,000 in their bank account. And all of this with one

goal in mind, building an indoor facility for the Watauga High baseball and softball teams.

"Our kids deserve this," said Lambert, who is the Foundation chairman. "We are in a very risky area weather wise, and our kids need a place where they can practice indoors when conditions aren't favorable. We're making progress, and we've been blessed with some great volunteers, who strongly believe in our cause."

The Foundation received a check in the amount of \$6,000 on Thursday afternoon in the WHS Media Center. That was the money earned at the Will Dicus Memorial Tournament last June. The Foundation also donated \$2,000 to Ashe County for hosting some games. And Randall Miller Trucking in Lenior, N.C., became a tournament sponsor last year.

"And they're coming back to sponsor our tournament again this year," Lambert said. "Our tournament has grown. We had 33 teams competing last season, and we even had six girls teams competing. The tournament has been a huge fundraiser for us. But I'm anxious to try some other things to raise money."

One possibility could be a WHS JV and varsity basketball tournament at Lentz-Eggers Gym next season.

"It could be a good fundraiser for us," Lambert said. "It's something we're tossing around right now. We still haven't spoken with (WHS Athletic Director) Tom Wright about it. I think we could draw a good field. I feel we have influential volunteers that could woo some coaches to play in this tournament. But it's an idea."

Turner has done her part as well. She's done the leg work by selling engraved bricks. In three years, she has sold nearly 200 bricks.

"And the bricks are all ready engraved," she said. "And anyone who made a donation for the bricks, your money is in the Foundation account. And selling bricks has to be an every year thing. It could be a good source for revenue. We are so thankful for these donations. The engraved bricks will really dress up the look of the facility."

A \$100 donation will buy an engraved brick.

"We just want the best for our kids," Lambert said. "It's an avenue for a kid to get a scholarship. We've had our share of players go on and play in college. We also want to help the Optomist Club to repair their fields. This has slowly grown into a charity for a worthy cause. Our goal is to help all the baseball at all levels in Watauga County."

The Foundation has also received approval from the WHS School Board to sell mesh sign sponsorships for the baseball and softball fields.

"And with the mesh signs, we can take them down when the season is over and put them in storage," Turner said.

Another goal, and at the same time the Foundation's greatest challenge, will be to get a donation of some sort from the Watauga County Commissioners.

"We would like for them to partner for us," Turner said. "My proposal will be to match what we've all ready raised. They could even lend us the money. It's a good business decision."

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Without a doubt.

NOTES: The Will Dicus Tournament will be held June 22-23 this season.