

Eat up to support area youth

My best friend just graduated from college. I drove down south to celebrate the completion of her hard work as the first official environmental science major to graduate from our university. Neither my friend nor I would be where we are today were it not for the efforts and encouragements of humble, loving individuals, friends, family and strangers alike.

You always have a chance to be one of those individuals, whether it be through mentorship or finance, and the Mother Lode is not short in supply of organizations willing to help the next generation take steps forward.

Soroptimist International of Twain Harte, a yearly giver of scholarships and other community resources, will have its All-you-can-eat Crab Feed from 4:30 to 7 p.m. Jan. 19 at the Tuolumne Veteran's Memorial Hall. The menu includes clam chowder, pasta, salad and all-you-can-eat crab, with beverages available for purchase. Tickets are \$40 at El Dorado Savings and Umpqua Bank in Twain Harte, or call Soroptimist member Patt Koral at 928-1616. All



funds benefit local charities.

On the same day, the Tuolumne County 4-H Community holds its Dinner and Cake Auction from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds. Funds go toward 4-H events, scholarships and leadership training, and the dinner include trip, baked potatoes, salad, bread and cookies, with vegetarian options available. To buy tickets or to learn further details, call Ron Hamilton at 588-6993.

Meanwhile, the Twain Harte Film Festival has announced it will distribute three scholarships in 2013.

Previous scholarships went through the Sonora Area Foundation, but the 2013 scholarships will come directly from the film festival, whose organizers are currently planning a filmmaking workshop for area residents and anyone interested that will happen sometime in spring. This workshop will inform students interested in filmmaking and media arts and will feature speakers from the filmmaking industry. Information will be made available when the workshop details are finalized.

"Every year we anticipate growing as a prominent film festival in

California," the film festival's executive director, Zach Gold, said. "As our fest grows, so will the funds for company, which is a nonprofit organization. Being able to reduce a student's tuition for a semester or provide financial support for books and materials is the purpose for our existence. The growth of our festival is inevitable and thus is our scholarship program."

The film fest's board of directors officially approved three \$500 scholarships to go to area students entering college, with applications, information and criteria to be released later this month at filmfesttwainharte.com.

"The festival is growing year by year, which enables us to do more with the scholarship funds," Gold said. "Because of our success last year, we are now able to create an educational outreach program fully sponsored by the festival by means of a filmmaking workshop where some of the leading directors and cinematographers will be teaching our local kids."

Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler



Gold said the board of directors and others involved hope to inspire the youth of the community so they can continue to pursue their educational dreams with financial support from the film fest.

"Our outreach program is paramount in the mission of the festival," Gold said. "All of this goes together hand in hand. The Mother Lode has an incredible history of filmmaking. If you Google it, you'll see over 200 recognizable TV shows and films over the past century. However, the trend has quelled over the past few decades and it's important to inspire the next generation to bring it back."

Send your Tuolumne County events to Harmony Wheeler at hwheeler@sierralodestar.com and mtaylor@sierralodestar.com.



Oakdale Roundup

Melinda Owen

I hope you gave 2013 a spirited start. And, if you checked your favorite dictionary, you would find the adjective "spirited" defined as "lively and animated." The noun "spirit" lists definitions like mood, vivacity and enthusiastic loyalty such as you would find related to school spirit.

In preparing the "Oakdale Roundup" for this week, I know I should be looking ahead, but I am not yet ready to let go of a December 2012 event that produced great school spirit in the community of Oakdale. That event was the California State High School Football Playoffs to which the celebrated Oakdale High School team had earned the opportunity to compete by winning the Northern California Regional Championship.

I know that in many of the towns of the Midwest and the South, they love their high school football. But I cannot imagine any other town could hold a candle to this community when it comes to the support demonstrated for OHS Mustang football.

Spirit swells in the Cowboy Capitol

Grabbing that dictionary again, "support" means to encourage, hold up, advocate for, provide assistance – all things that this generous and spirited community does and has done for the sports programs at OHS.

"Community" means a group having common interests, working



together, sharing a mission. Not unlike the word "team," which is a group of people joining in a cooperative activity – in this case, one fired-up, spirited group of Mustangs from

the Cowboy Capitol of the World that was on a quest to win it all.

The Mustangs earned their entry into the state championship with regional and sectional wins over Clayton Valley, Vista del Lago and American Canyon. Their Valley Oak League record was 7-0-0; their overall standings 14-2-0. In all their games, teammates played with "heart," defined as spirit or courage. The team proudly carried those stats with them on their journey to the Home Depot Center in Carson to play against Serra High of Gardena for the state title on Dec. 15.

Serra High was last year's champion; big, strong, fast and experienced. I wish I could tell you that the Mustangs came out on top in that game, but they were outmatched in size and quickness. It was very evident, however, that they were not overmatched in spirit, heart, support and community.

A strong contingent of fans – more than 1,300 – made the 350-mile trip from Oakdale to Southern California to support, encourage and uphold their OHS 'stangs, who played with heart, spirit and teamwork. The Serra High supporters from Gardena, just a few miles from the Home Depot Center, were sadly outnumbered by the Oakdale rooters who not only provided a

great show of support for their home team, but recognized the Serra High players with a standing ovation for their win.

Though the OHS football team of 2012 didn't return home as the state champs, they returned with pride to a community of support, spirit and heart. In fact, the phrase "Heart of a Champion" can be found inscribed

on the playing fields of the Corral – OHS's football stadium. Not surprisingly, the Corral was completely refurbished several years ago to the tune of several million dollars of community donated money and labor. This community puts its money where its spirit is. Way to go, Oakdale, and congratulations to the

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