CUTLINE:

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ON YOUR MARK: On Oct. 24, the Beaufort-Hyde Special Olympics will host a Family Fun Night Concert Fundraiser with proceeds benefitting the organization’s events like the N.C. Special Olympics Summer Games. Pictured are orange level competitors lined up for the tennis ball throw event at the Special Olympics Beaufort Hyde Program’s spring games on Wednesday at Washington High School’s Wagner Field.

SUGGESTED HEADLINE: Concert fundraiser to benefit athletes

By JONATHAN ROWE

Washington Daily News

A local volunteer organization will host its inaugural Family Fun Night Concert Fundraiser on Oct. 24, which will generate funds for several upcoming events.

The Special Olympics Beaufort Hyde Program will host the event, which will become one of the organization’s annual fundraisers, said Sara Benish, local coordinator. On Oct. 24, from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m., four local bands will perform at Transitions Auditorium. Admission is $12 in advance and $15 at the door. Among the lineup of acts is TJ Jones and the Pamlico Sound Machine, a beach music band; Silver Creek, an acoustic group; Side Project, who will present a mix of classic rock and oldies hits; and one band that has not yet been determined, Benish said.

The event will also include a cornhole tournament, face painting, concession sales, funnel cakes, a dunking booth and more, Benish said. There will also be a silent auction, for which items like jewelry donated from Frank’s Jewelers, a gift certificate for a concealed weapons carry class and other gift items. Those wishing to participate in the cornhole tournament will be charge $10 per person, with the winner receiving a grand prize.

Benish said the event will also feature special guests Greg Lassiter, a comedian who will emcee the concert and Roger Johnson, a Special Olympian and global messenger from the Special Olympics of North Carolina. As a global messenger, Johnson has been trained to be an ambassador-like figure that will address those in attendance about what the Special Olympics means to him, as well as spread awareness of how important it is to have the community involved, Benish said.

“He will talk about the Special Olympics organization and what it means to him, spread awareness of how important it is for the community to support us and get involved. He’s also going to express how people who are Special Olympics athletes are people too. They just want to be loved and have friends and have a life like everyone else. That’s what we are doing through this event, challenging the community to be brave and support our program.”

The theme of the event, “Be brave,” comes from the Special Olympics athlete oath, which states, “Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.” The organization is using that phrase to channel community support, which will enable the athletes to continue to learn life skills, self-confidence, teamwork and more, Benish said. The entire program is volunteer-based, meaning not only those who are coming out to help for the fundraiser, but also those like Benish, who set up and conduct local games and events.

“Our whole program is volunteer-based,” Benish said. “Everything we do kind of comes from the heart. The athletes will be there to help out, and we have volunteers from the community that will be there.”

Benish said proceeds from the event will go toward cost of conducting events like the Special Olympics Beaufort Hyde Summer Games, as well as funding outside programs like the organization’s swim, ski and bowling teams. All the money coming from the fundraiser will solely benefit those in Beaufort and Hyde counties who participate in the Special Olympics, Benish said.

“All proceeds stay right here in Beaufort and Hyde counties,” Benish said. “There’s the Special Olympics of North Carolina organization, but all the money from this event will stay here for local athletes.”

*Transitions Auditorium is located at 230 East 8th St., Washington. For more information, contact Sara Benish at 252-945-7344.*