

Cypress Hoops Invitational and CFEF Dollars for Scholars – A Winning Team

The 1st annual Cypress Hoops Invitational, a high school boys' basketball tournament held December 9-11, proved to be a great success thanks to the support of tournament organizers, sponsors, volunteers, attendees, and all of the talented coaches and players. All net proceeds from the event will be donated to the CFEF's Dollars for Scholars program, which provides instructional grant money for CFISD classrooms, along with scholarship funds for qualified students seeking education beyond high school.

Eric Burg, Tournament Co-Director along with his father, Robert Burg, had a vision for the event that went well beyond basketball.

"I grew up in Cypress, played basketball under Coach Draudt at Cy-Falls High School and graduated from there in 1996," Burg explains. "CFISD put on a tournament for many years called the Cy-Fair ISD Tournament, but due to budget constraints, it had dwindled in recent years. When a couple of coaches from the district came to us and asked if we would be interested in building it back up...making it a success, we were happy to step in and give it our best shot. My father and I wanted to help make this an exciting community event, not just a basketball tournament. I am a product of this community and school district, and we felt it was important for us to give back."

The district agreed to allow the Burgs to solicit sponsorship money from the local business community to help pay for the extra expense of growing the tournament from 18 to 24 teams (the largest team participation in the event's history). All ten CFISD high schools participated, along with fourteen Houston area teams, and the tournament champion was our own community's Cypress Lakes High School. All games were played at Cy-Woods, Cy-Ranch and The Berry Center – a facility that Burg considers "second to none as far as a place to bring your family and watch a basketball game". The invitational tournament was double-elimination and teams were selected by the coaches of the district.

The CFISD athletic department handled all logistical preparations. Special thanks go out to Pam Wells, Theresa Hull and Nate Gordon – all three of which were instrumental in the success of the Cypress Hoops Invitational's first year.

Nate Gordon, Associate Athletic Director, CFISD, is proud to be part of a group that was so determined to make this tournament a success. "We are fortunate to have community members like the Burgs and district ISC administrators," Gordon states. "The whole team worked closely together to plan, promote and produce a 'top notch' event to benefit the Cy-Fair Educational Foundation and our district and local basketball programs."

A total of thirteen sponsors funded the event, with donations ranging from \$500 to \$8,000. All dollars were used for tournament costs (Berry Center, referees, scorekeepers, ticket takers, trophies, medals, etc.). Food donations were also received, including a free, pre-tournament dinner for over 60 coaches at Goode Co. BBQ on 290, and tasty bites from Willie's, Chick-fil-A, Newk's, and Alicia's Mexican Grille for hospitality rooms at each site.

Special thanks go out to the Title Sponsor for the Cypress Hoops Invitational, North Cypress Medical Center, who donated a tournament-boosting \$8,000. Additional generous sponsors included: The Burg Insurance Agencies/Farmers Insurance; Westbound Bank; Barcelona Sporting Goods; Bay Architects; Velocity Sports Performance; Balfour; Fox & Bubela, Inc.; and Joe M. Piazza Jr., DDS.

The future of the Cypress Hoops Invitational looks bright. The key to that success will rely heavily on the continued involvement of the community.

“We are looking for like-minded individuals committed to growing this event,” says Burg. “We would like to someday rival the Pasadena McDonald’s Invitational as the premier high school basketball tournament in the state. The Pasadena Invitational is 10 years old and last year donated net proceeds of over \$140,000 to the Pasadena Education Foundation. With a lot of hard work and dedication, we think we can do the same...or better!”

For more information on sponsorship opportunities and/or joining next year’s Cypress Hoops Invitational tournament committee, contact CFEF Executive Director, Marie Holmes at 281-807-3591 or marie@thecfef.org.