

PTO seeks community help to replace aging playgrounds

By M.B. GILLIGAN
Post Correspondent

HARVEYS LAKE — Erected 20 years ago, the playgrounds at LakeNoxen Elementary School, in the Lake-Lehman School District, have been getting smaller and smaller over the last few years. Made of pressure treated lumber, as pieces deteriorate they have been removed to help prevent injuries.

The 390 students at the school use the playground during recess and the school nurse sees frequent reports of splinters.

"I've been thinking a lot about it the last few years and finally decided we should try to do something," said Mary Lou Kocher, corresponding secretary for Lake-Noxen PTO. "I mentioned it at a PTO meeting and Valerie Williams and some others volunteered to help. We asked David McLaughlin-Smith, the principal, for his okay and we've sent a letter to the school board."

The PTO has been studying plans and has come up with a proposal for a "dream playground." They estimate it will cost approximately \$60,000 to remove the existing equipment and build two new playground areas — one for the kindergarten students and a larger one for the rest of the school.

"I would love to see it start this spring," said Kocher. "We know we may not have enough money to do everything we are looking at right now, but we'd like to at least get started and then add to it as we get more funding."

The Lake-Noxen PTO members hope to get some help from the school board for their proposed playground.

"We're waiting to hear when it will be on the school board agenda," said Amy Butchko, PTO president. "A lot of our members plan to attend that meeting."

The PTO has begun a campaign to raise the needed funding. They sent letters to many area businesses, both large and

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Lake-Noxen PTO

small. They have also placed "spare change" containers in area restaurants and businesses. They are looking into and applying for applicable grants. In addition, they are asking for donations of time, labor or equipment for removing the old playground apparatus and to erect the new playground.

"The plan we have right now contains all handicapped accessible pieces," said Kocher. "We are not definitely set on this plan and if someone came along and gave us a better deal, we'd certainly consider it."

The students at Lake-Noxen also want to lend a hand with fundraising for their new playground. The three third grade classes have planned a "Block Party" for October 25. They have invited their neighbor classes — the second and fourth grades — to attend. They plan to have face painting, games with prizes, and snacks.

The PTO has come up with some other fundraising plans. They earned \$800 from a recent sale of cloth book covers called Book Sox. In addition, the Pizza Hut in Dallas will donate 20 percent of sales every Monday night for anyone presenting coupons, which were recently sent home with to all students. Coupons can also be obtained from any PTO member.

"We have gotten some donations from area businesses but not a lot. I thought we'd really do better because it is for the kids in the community and not only the school students," said Kocher. "Those playgrounds are open to the public and lots of children use them."

Anyone who would like to help by making a donation, putting a "spare change" canister in their business or in any other way is asked to call Mary Lou Kocher at 477-2281.



POST PHOTO/M.B. GILLIGAN

Mary Lou Kocher, left, Lake-Noxen playground committee chair, and right is Amy Butchko, Lake-Noxen Elementary School PTO president, stand in the present playground.

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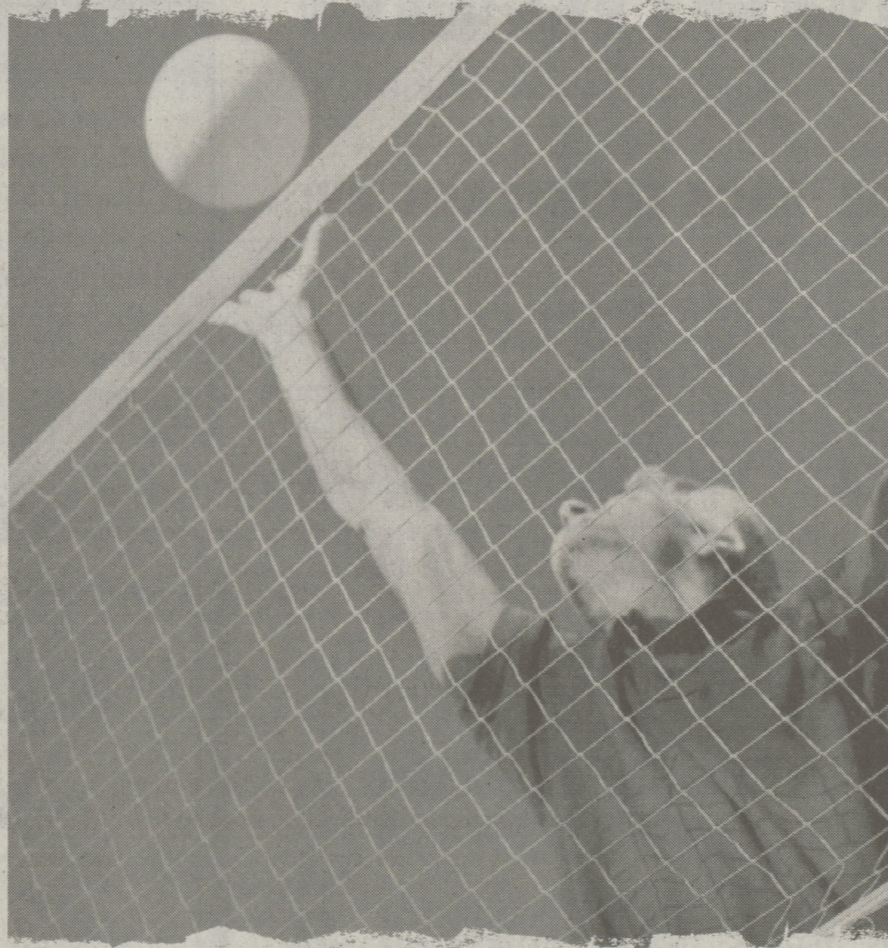
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