

Hopewell Valley News

PENNINGTON: Turf's Up! event set on March 17 at PQM

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Shown from left are Band Brass Section Leader Andrew Pisetzner and Band President Anoush Aghababian, They are being trained on how to bag groceries by PQM Customer Service Manager Deb Delutis.

The broad-based community effort to build a turf athletic field at Hopewell Valley Central High School will get a major boost on March 17, when the Pennington Quality Market and other area businesses will donate 5 percent of all receipts that day toward the field.

Other businesses that will donate 5 percent of their receipts include The Front Porch and Rosanna, a gift shop and dress shop respectively, on South Main Street in Pennington, and Pennington Bagel, located in the same shopping center as Pennington Quality Market (PQM) off Route 31.

"We're trying to make the 17th as fun and festive a day as we can," said Mike Rothwell, whose family owns PQM.. "There'll be face-painting for kids, music and raffles of items donated by area businesses."

Among the items to be raffled off are a flat-screen television and grill.

The Hopewell Valley Recreation Foundation has raised \$750,000 so far for the field, said Sheryl Stone. "Our goal is a million dollars," she said. "We're hoping for construction this summer. That way, the field would be ready for the opening of school in September."

The turf field would be able to be used much more often than a regular grass field and would require less maintenance, school and athletic officials have said. School teams and the marching band would use the field, along with recreational league teams.

"We consider this a really worthwhile, exciting project," Mr. Rothwell said of working to build the new field. "We've built our reputation here at the store by supporting the greater good of the community. This field will be a long-term benefit to our youth and their families. I think it'll prove cost-effective, as well, because it requires less maintenance than grass fields."

Central High School's Marching Black and Gold band will perform at the Market at 9 a.m. on March 17.

Coaches, athletes and band members from the school will help out as "celebrity baggers" on the big day. "We're hoping it'll be a real community day," Ms. Stone said.

"From the Recreation Foundation's point of view, March 17 will be an exciting event. The Pennington Quality Market and the Rothwell family really have supported our community. They're a big part of making our community what it is. It's an honor for us to partner with them. It's really the most significant endorsement we could have. It's important to note that, in addition to supporting the turf field, this is a chance to support our local businesses." Ms. Stone added.

Chris Murphy, owner of The Front Porch and an active participant in the effort to build the new field, agreed. "I hope the community remembers to support the Quality Market and other businesses that are supporting this project and that have supported many other efforts for the community at large as well."