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'Turf's Up!' project puts money in new fields and residents' pockets

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By R. Kurt Osenlund, Pennington Post

Part of the Hopewell Valley Recreation Foundation's ongoing "Turf's Up!" fundraiser, a recent 50/50 raffle gave three locals a richer holiday season.

Three Hopewell Valley residents are a little richer this holiday season, thanks to a 50/50 raffle sponsored by the Recreation Foundation of Hopewell Valley in honor of the "Turf's Up!" project.

Lauri Rossi, Pam Wilson and Ned Fletcher each took home a portion of the \$5,500 winnings, which came from the \$11,000 the foundation raised in ticket sales.

"It's so exciting," says Rossi, the raffle's first-place winner.

"Turf's Up!" is a fundraising initiative formed to support the installation of new multi-purpose athletic fields at Hopewell Valley Central High School.

The field is expected to be used for soccer, football, field hockey, lacrosse and the school's marching band.

The new field isn't the only project of its kind to be championed and funded by the foundation. The natural grass fields in the back of Timberlane Middle School were also made possible by foundation funds.

"[The 'Turf's Up!' project] is a logical follow-up to our last project," says foundation trustee Sheryl Stone. "The athletic fields at Timberlane couldn't solve our field shortage, especially when rain or drought takes natural grass fields out of play."

According to foundation representatives, Hopewell Valley Central is one of very few Mercer County high schools without a turf field. The "Turf's Up!" project, they say, has been unanimously endorsed by the Hopewell Valley school board, who passed a resolution in support.

For the turf-laying first phase of the project, the foundation provided \$100,000 – a considerable chunk of the first phase's estimated total cost of \$850,000.

(The following two phases, which involve the installation of bleachers and lights, are each expected to receive a \$350,000 boost from the foundation.)

Preceding the raffle this year was the foundation's annual Fall Ball, which drew in over 200 community members and also served to raise money for "Turf's Up!" ("It was our largest attendance to date," says Fall Ball chair Cynthia Wiley.)

Foundation reps say that, combined, the Fall Ball ticket sales, the Fall Ball auction earnings and the funds raised at the

raffle equal out to nearly \$50,000 for “Turf’s Up!”

“I think the response demonstrates the support in our community for a turf field,” Wiley says.

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To learn more about the recreation foundation, visit <http://www2.hvrsd.org>

[/community/Pages/RecreationFoundation.aspx](http://www2.hvrsd.org/community/Pages/RecreationFoundation.aspx).

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