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WHERE WE LIVE

BY GAIL MAHOLICK

Making it a success

Joining together my love of kayaking and wanting to fundraise for my favorite charity, Dream Come True, inspired me to plan PaddleFEST. While I am the coordinator, there are many people behind the scenes who have helped get this event together.

Now all we need for a successful day tomorrow is sunny weather. By 10 a.m. I anticipate Mauch Chunk Lake Park will be a frenzy of activity as people come through the gate (hopefully they come) and enjoy all that has been planned for their enjoyment. There will be plenty of kayaks to try, music, food, vendors, crafters, displays and activities.

This event couldn't have happened without a few key people and I thank State Rep. Keith McCall for being supportive. He contacted Harrisburg to get launch permit requirements waived for the day. I wouldn't have even known who to call.

Next he sponsored advertising on our T-shirt and has been a morale booster throughout the planning stages.

I also want to thank Mike Hopstock and his son, Steven. Steven is helping with PaddleFEST to complete his 60 hours of community service for his senior project and so are Erica Meyers and Amanda Kunkle. These two young ladies not only have organizational skills, but a lot of drive and determination. I am so proud of all three teenagers. Then I have to thank all businesses who donated items and the entertainment, who are all coming with no thought of getting paid. We will have the Dream Kids, Jourdan Irene, Wayne and Becky Duggins, Styll and Jim Cimms sharing their talents with everyone.

Then there are the many members of the Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, including Jerry and Shannon McAward from the Northeast Pa. Kayak School, Boy Scout Troop 555, Jim Thorpe; Blue Ridge Chapter of Dream Come True, Dave Horvath, director of Carbon County Parks; Scott Christman of the Pa. Fish and Boat Commission, Ray Ann Vasko, executive director of Dream Come True; members of the Carbon County Amateur Radio Club, the five outfitters bringing boats, including Whitewater Adventures, Jim Thorpe; Appalachian Outfitters, Port Clinton; The Pocono Boat House, Route 940, Blakeslee; Nestors, Quakertown; and The Adventure Lodge, Bethlehem; as well as canoes provided Dave and Jane Simon. Blue Mountain Sports is also loaning us their entire fleet of rental boats for the day, some which have never seen water before.

I also am proud of my daughter, Carey, for the web site at <http://www.dreamcometrue-paddlefest.com/>.

In addition sponsoring T-shirt advertising were Lehighon Ford Lincoln Mercury, Pencor Services, Slate Belt Sporting Goods, Jim Thorpe Chamber of Commerce, Carbon Builders Association, Blue Mountain Ski Area, Ovsak Funeral Home, Lehighon, The Treasure Shop, Jim Thorpe, and Jim Thorpe National Bank and Classic Pet Grooming. Without their support, as well as Dr. Edward Miller's support in sponsoring the raffle tickets, I wouldn't have had the start up funds needed.

So many people have stepped forward to call and volunteer. Now I need good weather and plenty of participants to make this day a success.

Its amazing to me that so many people want to help, but then I guess I shouldn't be too surprised because the people in this community have always supported Dream Come True's mission to fulfill dreams of the very sick children in our community.

*Three children from the local area have had their dreams fulfilled in the past two weeks. We thank the community for your help.