

## Sports Challenge raises money for Partners Mentoring Youth

BY MOLLY ARMBRISTER • MollyArmbrister  
@coloradoan.com • August 15, 2010

Local businesses interested in helping troubled youths played their way to a fundraising goal of \$55,000 on Saturday at the 30th annual Super Stars Sports Challenge hosted by local nonprofit Partners Mentoring Youth.

Employees of local companies that gathered in Spring Canyon Community Park for the event competed in five different sporting events: dodgeball, volleyball, Bocce ball, a Big Wheels bike relay and an obstacle course. The top three teams in each sport were awarded points, which were tallied at the end of the day.

In addition to the \$500 registration fee per team, the companies also worked to raise funds in the weeks leading up to the challenge, each angling to be the team that raised the most money, a feat that would earn them 30 points toward the total team score.

Tricia Lemmer, who volunteers on the planning committee for the event, said the companies raise money in a variety of ways, from online fundraisers to company barbecues. All the work put in by the companies that participated paid off, according to Greg Soffe, development manager at Partners Mentoring Youth.

"The official numbers haven't come in yet, but it looks like we're on track to meet our goal of \$55,000," Soffe said.

Partners Mentoring Youth has been matching troubled youths between the ages of 7 and 17 with mentors they call "senior partners" for more than 30 years, Soffe said. Aside from the main office in Fort Collins, Partners Mentoring Youth has offices in Loveland, Estes Park and Greeley. Kids who are referred to Partners are matched with senior partners who commit to mentoring the children for a full year. Unfortunately, for boys especially, the wait for a mentor can be rather lengthy, often 1 to 2 years.

"We're in a really big need of male mentors," Soffe

said.

The work done by Partners Mentoring Youth in the lives of local kids is what motivated the companies to enter their teams in the challenge. Nicole Olovich of RB+B Architects participated in the event for the second year and said the fact that the funds helped kids motivated her team to participate.

"We do a lot of work with schools, and our heart is for supporting the children in the community," she said. She also mentioned the event's potential for building relationships between co-workers.

Sergio Ortiz of Neenan Archistructure enjoyed participating in the event for the first time, despite the fact that his team didn't place among the top three in the competitions.

"We had fun, and that's really all that matters," he said. Ortiz and his co-workers also enjoyed being able to help the kids in the program with their donations.

"We just do what we can to help," said Nick Porro, another Neenan employee.

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Bryan Pekara tosses a Bocce ball during the annual SuperStars Sports Challenge on Saturday at Spring Canyon Community Park. Teams of 10 or more participated in the event, which benefited Partners Mentoring Youth. (Sara Marie Fossum/The Coloradoan)

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**Mentors**

Partners Mentoring Youth has one more fundraiser this year, the sixth annual Running of the Bulls, which will take place Sept. 25 in Estes Park. The event will consist of a 3.75-mile walk/run in Rocky Mountain National Park. For more information, visit [www.partnersmentoringyouth.org](http://www.partnersmentoringyouth.org).

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