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For the St. Paul Rodeo

## **PARKING CARS TO RAISE FUNDS**

*St. Paul High School athletic teams, other organizations benefit from rodeo*

St. Paul, Ore. (June 25, 2018) – The kids on sports teams at St. Paul (Ore.) High School are called upon each July to help out.

Their job: man the parking lots for the biggest event that takes place in St. Paul: the St. Paul Rodeo, the Nation's Greatest Fourth of July rodeo.

The rodeo, which attracts 50,000 people to the little town of 450, is used in a variety of ways as a fundraiser for groups in the community.

The Jaycees provide entertainment in the Bull Pen (the beer garden), the St. Paul Catholic Church serves barbecue chicken, and the high school athletics programs park cars and sell concessions.

It's a big job, and it requires every student from grade six through those who will be seniors in high school each fall.

Each team takes a night: the football team might take the first night, the girls basketball team might take the matinee show, and so on. And because many of the youth play more than one sport, they may work more than one show.

It's a great way for the kids to learn how to be part of the community and how to be part of something bigger than themselves, said Karen Tuck, a lifelong St. Paul resident and the mother of two children, Megan, age seventeen, and Lance, who is fourteen. "You learn at a young age what it means to be part of a community and what it takes. Everybody has to do their share to pull off such a big event, like the rodeo."

It takes everybody in town to step in and volunteer during rodeo week. With only one paid employee on the rodeo staff, several hundred volunteers do everything from sell tickets, souvenirs and concessions, to serving as usher, and even spending months before the rodeo prepping the grounds with fresh coats of paint.

There's not a big expansive parking lot for the rodeo, so every spot in town is utilized: the church and high school parking lot and business lots downtown allow the kids to park cars, to benefit the booster club.

The booster club uses the funds raised for a variety of things: uniforms, defraying the cost of travel to play-offs and state competition, improvements to the track, even keeping athletic

programs going. St. Paul High School is a 1A school, the smallest in the state, and as many small schools cut sports that are expensive, St. Paul High hasn't had to do that.

Many of the kids who are parking cars got their start in concession stands as sixth graders or even younger, serving the easy things and learning how to be part of the "team." Learning how to work together is crucial, Tuck said. "They learn how to show up and get things done, that things have to be cleaned before we start, and cleaned up afterwards. The work doesn't end with your shift, and you make sure things are done right and left better than you found them."

The volunteer work also is beneficial to the youth as they apply for scholarships before graduation. "They definitely have a long list of volunteer things they've done in their community," Tuck said.

Megan Tuck has volunteered at the rodeo since she was in sixth grade, starting with selling candy. She doesn't mind the volunteer work and actually enjoys being with her friends, even though on July Fourth, "you're not on the river, you're working the rodeo."

Her mom Karen grew up volunteering at the rodeo and now her kids are doing the same, along with her classmates. "A lot of people, like me, grew up in St. Paul, came back to raise our kids here, and the circle of life continues in St. Paul," Karen said.

"It takes a village to put on a rodeo."

In addition to the St. Paul High School Booster Club, 26 other organizations benefitted from the 2017 rodeo, either through donations made by the rodeo association or through working at the event. Last year, over \$73,000 was given to those organizations.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> annual St. Paul Rodeo runs July 3-7, with performances nightly at 7:30 pm and a 1:30 pm matinee on July 4. The annual parade is at 10 am on July 4, and fireworks follow each nightly performance. The Tack Room Saloon is open each day for adults ages 21 and over, and the Wild West Art Tent is also open.

Tickets are on sale and range in price from \$16 to \$26. They can be purchased online at [www.StPaulRodeo.com](http://www.StPaulRodeo.com), at the rodeo ticket office, or at the gate.

For more information, visit the website or call the rodeo office at 800.237.5920.

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Haley Scott, a 2018 St. Paul High School graduate, volunteers her time parking cars for the St. Paul Rodeo. Students in grades six through twelve who participate in sports work the parking lots. In return, the rodeo donates money to the high school's booster club. Photo courtesy Karen Tuck.