

A 'fine' festival of fun, fundraising

School carnival returns after six years

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Most Yutan junior and senior high students have fond memories of attending the Fine Arts Carnival as kids, with its games, inflatables, food and more. Before issues with sickness and COVID arose, the event had been a fun activity for the entire community of Yutan to enjoy. This year, the carnival made its comeback for the first time in six years.

"It provides a night of fun that everybody in a Yutan family can either help with or attend and make memories," Fine Arts Boosters member Rebecca Ringer said.



Eighth grader Griffin Ell gets ready to pie senior Carson Jurey in the face. Pie-in-the-face was just one of 20 different games kids could play at the carnival. (Taylar Shull)

The event, though popular among the community of Yutan, was first cancelled in 2021 because of COVID and then in 2022 because of widespread sickness in the district, but this wasn't the only thing holding back the carnival's return.

"You have to have a pretty large good group of people that are ready to organize such events. I don't think that we had the energy to put towards bringing it back in the last few years," Fine Arts Boosters member Rachelle Sliva said.

Since the fine arts have seen declining numbers, the Fine Arts Boosters teamed up with the post prom parents to make this year's carnival happen.

"The number of students in fine arts has drastically dropped, and we needed 50+ volunteers, so bringing in junior and senior students (post prom) to meet our volunteer numbers was a necessity," Ringer said.

The change of working together turned out to be a major benefit for both groups.

"The core group of parents that did the majority of the planning and set up worked well together. Both groups look for ways to fundraise during the year; by bringing the Carnival back, it's a way to bring the community together and both groups to raise some money," former head of the Fine Arts Boosters and current head of post prom Amy Tichota said

However, because the carnival hadn't been held for so many years, there were some early challenges.

"We haven't run an event for so many years. There's a lot of education to the parents that haven't been on the preparing side of what we need to get done, what we need to have ready. And then also, another challenge is, okay, this is not just fine arts, it's post prom," Tichota said.

While parents did the bulk of the preparations, the actual carnival is run by students. This year, especially, the groups needed help from junior high and high school students.

"[The students] put in hours to come help run the games, be pried in the face and also provided goodies for the cake walk and just helping outside with hauling stuff, sorting stuff," Sliva said.

Students who helped with the carnival had many different stations they could work at, such as Plinko, face painting, ring toss and much more. All of the jobs were a fun way for them to work on their leadership and responsibility skills.

"You get to have responsibility skills of making sure your prize boxes were filled, you had enough stuff for your station, making sure little kids were happy and making sure they had fun at the carnival," eighth-grader Clara Tasich said.

Even though there was a lot of work involved, students had fun working at the carnival.

"I think it's a really good way to get the community together, and I had a really fun time overall. I didn't end up logging my community (service) just because I had just had such a good time. I think it's good for the kids, especially because when I was younger, I remember I loved the carnival so much. So it's such a great opportunity to be able to come back and work. It's a good opportunity for community service for the high schoolers, but also just a good social thing," sophomore Erika Sons said.

The comeback of the carnival ended on a positive note, with another carnival next year seeming likely.

"We tracked the sale of wristbands sold and tickets turned in at each game. We use that information to plan the next carnival. We watched how games were played and made notes so we can improve for the next carnival," Tichota said.

All in all, the carnival had a great turnout with many benefits for all involved.

"I love that the kids work it," Ringer said. "I love it when little people interact with the big people and get to look up to them and see them work it too and then be like, someday I'm going to get to work the carnival. So I love that for our community."



Sophomore Isaac Anderson and junior Eli Kult explain the rules of the bounce house to younger students. Kids could buy a \$7 wristband for unlimited inflatables. (Taylor Shull)