

THE BRAZIL TIMES

WE APPRECIATE YOU: JAG veterans picnic highlighted by record turnout, beautiful weather

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

IVY JACOBS • Times Reporter

Thanks to the beautiful weather over the weekend the fourth annual Veterans Appreciation Picnic at Forest Park was a big success.

Northview High School Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) sponsor Dana Bottomley said the weather on Sunday provided a nice backdrop for the event, which had the highest turnout in its history.

"A lot of people who came out were talking about the weather and how nice it was," said Bottomley, who added the crowd was also talking about the frigid temperatures last year. "It's much nicer when it's not 30 degrees outside."

Many of the veterans and their families had been to the previous picnics.

"That's really nice," Bottomley said. "The students get to know the veterans and their families on a personal level."

She said the event is a favorite of the students, who are involved in every decision, from deciding menu items, to the table decorations and what type of small gifts are passed out to the veterans.

"This is our way of saying 'thank you,'" said NHS senior Becky Gregory while helping serve lunch. "We want to show them that we really care about them."

"And that we really care about their sacrifices," added fellow NHS senior Mickey Sparks.

Dana's husband, Rusty, was also on hand, manning the grill for the more than 100 guests attending the event.

"It's worked out really good this year," Rusty said, adding the connection the students make with the veterans (and the community) is very important. "Some of the kids have some direct connections through family members who were or are in the military. A lot of them don't have that; so, it's good for them to understand what those veterans did and went through that allow us to do things like this today."

Bottomley said two shifts of students, a total of 25 juniors and seniors from NHS, worked the "student-driven" event, which capped off a weekend of events showing appreciation for veterans, including the Loyalty Day Parade on Saturday.

"It's really been a great event this year," she said as more guests showed up for lunch.

Jobs for America's Graduates is a state-based national non-profit organization dedicated to helping young people stay in school through graduation, pursue post-secondary education and secure quality entry-level jobs leading to career advancement opportunities. The JAG program is funded through grants provided by WorkOne, the Western Indiana Workforce Investment Board and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

Incoming Northview junior or senior students interested in the JAG program should contact their guidance counselor or JAG Specialist Dana Bottomley for more information about how to participate during the upcoming 2017-18 school year.

[JAG Indiana Celebrates 10-Year Anniversary](#)

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) is a state-based, national non-profit organization dedicated to preventing dropouts among young people who are most at-risk. JAG's mission is to keep young people in school

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through graduation and provide work-based learning experiences that will lead to career advancement opportunities, or to enroll in a postsecondary institution that leads to a rewarding career.

JAG students receive adult mentoring while in school and one year of follow-up counseling after graduation. Indiana's program consistently graduates approximately 94 percent of participants and many students choose to continue their education after high school. The JAG program is funded through grants provided by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

Take a survey to learn more about JAG at www.in.gov/dwd/JAG.htm

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