

August 20, 2013

Superintendent Forsten and Laconia School Board,

It has come to our attention that the Key Club will no longer be able to operate the concession stand at home football games. Instead, we understand, the rights have been given to Laconia Youth Football.

This news is very troubling to the Kiwanis Club of Laconia, who supports the Key Club and their efforts. When we first became aware that this may occur, we reached out to the School Board Chair Joe Cormier, and the then Superintendent Bob Champlin, expressing our concern. We invited Mr. Cormier and Mr. Champlin as well as the Key Club advisors to a Board meeting to discuss the matter. On April 1st, 2013 Mr. Cormier met with our board and both Key Club advisors to listen to our concerns. At that time, we were assured no decisions had been made and we would be included in the discussion going forward. We have not heard anything directly since.

We followed up with an email to Mr. Cormier early in June and again in July, in an effort to let you know we were still watching and waiting to hear about the changes coming. Both times we were given the same answer. "No decision has been made and we will keep you informed." We have not been kept informed, as we now learn a decision has been made with no opportunity for input.

The change we were hoping would not occur was the Key Club losing the rights to operate the concession stand during home football games. The concession stand acts as a major fund raiser for the Key Club enabling them to participate in civic programs as an early introduction to the importance of giving back to the community. Some of the things the LHS Key Club does with the money raised by concession earnings include:

- 1. Providing final exam goodie bags to all students at Laconia High School, free of charge, during final exams.** These bags included a pencil, pens, sticky notes, breath mints, a couple pieces of candy, and an inspirational note with the Key Club logo. Students are also given water and a healthy snack.
- 2. Donating to the Penny Wars for breast cancer research.** Penny Wars for breast cancer research was a fundraising activity where the Key Club created a competition between classes by awarding points based on the amount of money donated.
- 3. Assisting participants in Homeless Awareness Night with food left over from the snack shack.** Homeless awareness night was an activity where members of the Key Club spent the night in cardboard boxes to raise awareness of homelessness in the Laconia area. Both in school and during the night itself, members of Key Club collected food and money, donating both to a local food pantry.
- 4. Matching monies raised by members who participate in the Salvation Army's November Turkey Plunge.** The LHS Key Club matched donations, up to \$100, for each member (and advisor) who participated in the Turkey Plunge.

5. Raising money for the “Believe in Books Literacy Foundation”. In December, the LHS Key Club went to North Conway, NH to volunteer at the Polar Express, which raises money for the "Believe in Books Literacy Foundation." Key Club members dressed up as elves and guided children to and from the train station, as well as participated in a reading of the Polar Express.

6. Partially funding costs that enable Key Club members to assist in the Habitat for Humanity program. Key Club has regularly participated in Habitat for Humanity as a culminating end-of-year activity. Key Club students sacrifice their spring or winter vacation in order to do this. While students are asked to provide a nominal donation, Key Club pays for transportation, food, lodging, and most incidental costs, when applicable.

Just like the Kiwanis Club, all money raised is donated to further a worthy cause.

The decision to eliminate the LHS Key Club from operating the concession stand at home football games raises a question. What is it about the Laconia Youth Football organization that you felt it was worth jeopardizing the 60+ year tradition of the LHS Key Club? These are students running concessions at their classmates’ games to benefit the student body and their community. Will Laconia Youth Football give back concession profits to the community in the same noble manner?

Why is this change necessary? Why wasn’t the Laconia Kiwanis Club included in the discussions as was promised?

At this point, it is speculative to guess how successful other activities in the new stadium will fare relative to raising concession stand income. As such, we feel the Key Club losing the privilege to run the concession stand during home football games poses a major financial hurdle to the fiscal future of the Club and its ability to fund their community activities.

The decision to take this source of fundraising away from the Key Club and giving it to Laconia Youth Football is, on the face of it, rife with bias. We urge you, Terri, and the entire board to reconsider.

In summary, we are so very disappointed. How or why a money-raising program for good causes, by students, at a student activity loses this opportunity to an outside group of non-students leaves us absolutely bewildered. We urge you to reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,

The Kiwanis Club of Laconia:

Scott Laurent – President

Jack Batchelder – Vice President

Joe Adrignola – Treasurer

Katherine Calvin – Secretary

John Walker – Director

Elizabeth Ballantyne - Director

Steve Loughlin – Director

Kevin Irish - Director