

St. Henry hosts Laffalot camp

Program designed to teach kids good sportsmanship while having fun

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ST. HENRY — Hayden Boeckman dug in his heels as he geared up to dodge the balls rocketing toward him in the high school gym.

Boeckman, 8, this week joined 18 other first- to sixth-graders at Laffalot Summer Camp, a week-long program sponsored for the first time this year by St. Henry schools.

More than 1,500 children each year attend the camp at 50 locations from Northern Kentucky to Toledo.

The program is designed to teach students good sportsmanship while they enjoy a variety of outside and inside activities, said camp leader Mindy Sieftring, a physical education and health teacher at St. Henry schools.

"We're very excited this year about the participation and hope that next year we'll have even more students," she said, while giving encouraging words to the children playing Siamese soccer.

The camp, held from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., also teaches youngsters how to develop teamwork, build body coordination, improve interpersonal skills and enjoy friendly competition, Sieftring said.

Each day the camp offers a different set of games to play

such as field freeze ball, crazy ball, floor hockey and scooter basketball. To add more fun, the students are asked to wear different items of clothing each day — a funny hat, crazy socks or blue or red T-shirts.

Boeckman, soon to be a third-grader, was sweaty and thirsty after finishing a soccer game. But after a few gulps of water, he charged into the gym to play dodgeball.

"These are fun," he said, grinning. "But I really like to play capture the flag the best. I like games. I'm in baseball, basketball and soccer. I guess I like sports."

Lauren Mestemaker, 10, a fifth-grader, pulled her long, blonde hair into a tight ponytail between activities. She's been enjoying the games and has learned a little about sportsmanship, she said.

"It's been fun, too," Mestemaker said, laughing, before running off to play no outs kickball.

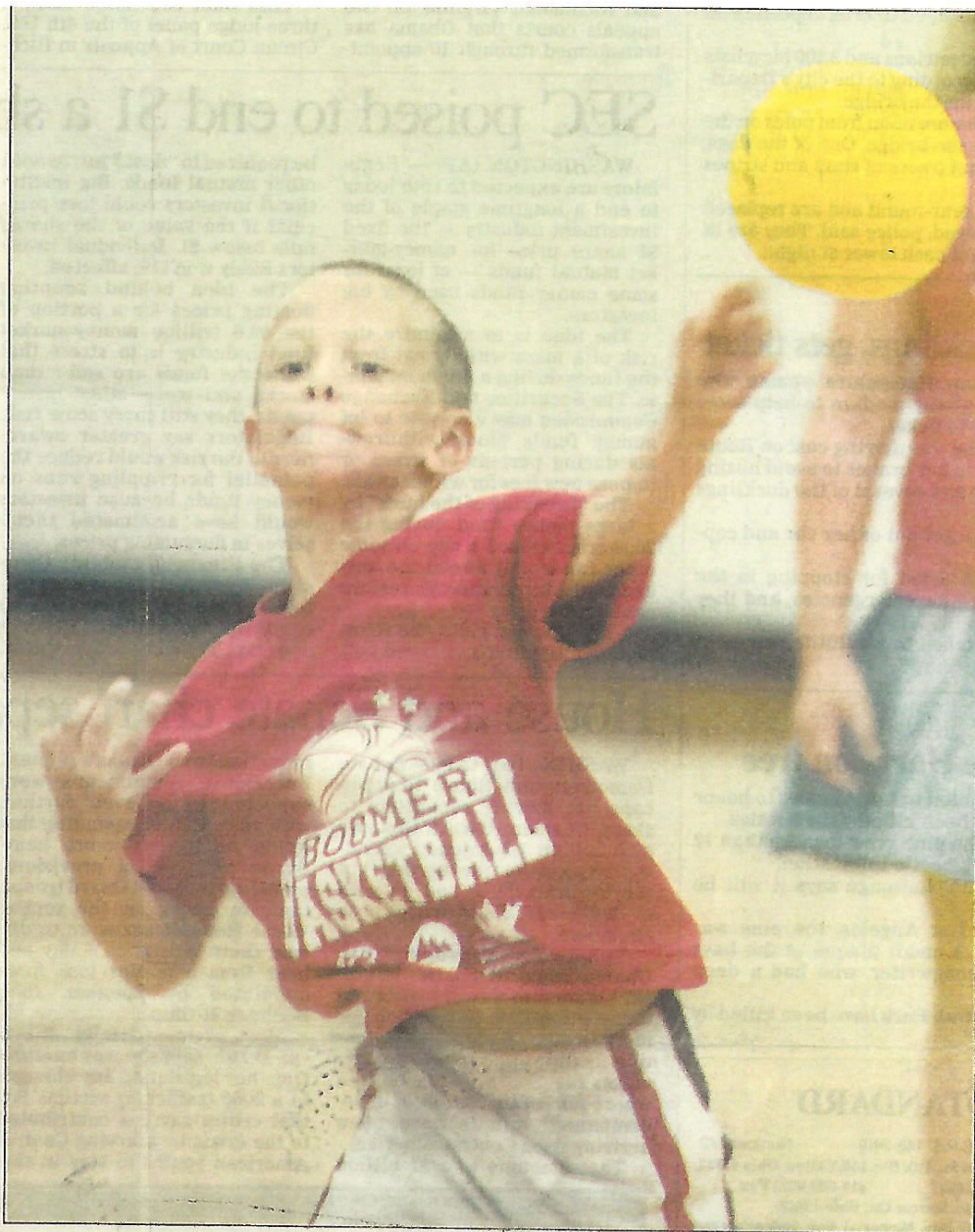
Two high school juniors — Jacey King and Ethan Huelskamp — are assisting Sieftring with the camp. She noted they "really do all the hard work" and are "energetic, love playing with the kids and have good leadership qualities."

"They've got a lot of patience and know how to relate to the kids," Sieftring added.

Huelskamp said he's helped younger children in Boy Scouts

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— Mindy Sieftring,
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and health teacher



Mark Pummell/The Daily Standard

Tate Boeckman, 6, puts his heart into a dodgeball game during St. Henry schools' first-ever Laffalot Summer Camp on Tuesday. Nineteen students are participating in the weeklong, day camp for first-through sixth-graders.

and has the basic knowledge of how to entertain and direct the students.

King thought her duties at

camp would provide good training experience since someday she wants to enter the medical field with a focus on children.

"I've learned a lot of patience," she said with a smile. "They're pretty funny, bright, so you have to stay on your toes."