Melon Chunkin’ Festival Post News Release

September 29, 2023

Tri-County Family Care Center sponsored a Melon Chunkin’ Festival on Saturday, September 16 at the Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds. Teams were recruited to launch the watermelons and cantaloupes with the trebuchet machines. The concept was to build family strengthening and team building. Each team had two practice shots and then three launches that counted for their score. Teams were judged on communication, teamwork and how well they scored with the launching for distance. This event was made possible with cantaloupe and watermelon provided by Hirakata Farms, Matt Proctor Farms and Sacket Farm Market. Two trebuchet machines were provided for the teams to use. Malcham Muth built a metal trebuchet and TCFCC had their wooden trebuchet, refurbished by Matt Rouleau. Malcham & Matt managed the trebuchets and guided the teams on safety to operate them. There were 15 food, craft and other vendors, a chainsaw carver and Knights in Armor. The Knights performed sword fights at 11 am, 1:00 & 3:30 pm, which were enjoyed by those attending. Trent Ryan with Ark Valley Entertainment was DJ for the day.

The 1st place team for longest launched cantaloupe and Team Building was team Double O, Dyson & Kyla Oquist and Candy O’Neal. Team Pioneer Pride, Katie Carlsen, Kathleen Bruna, Amy Maes, Dena Rivera and Diamond Davis, had longest launch overall for a single cantaloupe. Team Pioneer Power, Katie Carlsen, Kathie Carlsen, Emillo Rivera and Melonie Lathrum team “put up a good fight.” Team USA, Brenda, Kale & Isaac Rouleau, Ethan Trujillo and Jenifer Schulz had 1st place with longest launched watermelon and Team Building. The team Barbies, Leah, Barbara & Nelly Thimgan and Loretta Sanders had the “best costume.” Judges were Cliff Schulz, Robert Hernandez and Gary Reed. All of the teams stated they learned how to work better together and had fun doing it! Participants can sign up now for our event next year by calling 719-254-7776.

The following people won by purchasing tickets for the intermission contests: Longest distance cantaloupe catapult: 1st for longest distance, Kristy Freeman, 2nd Tony Moreland, & 3rd Jenifer Schulz. Closest to the bullseye cantaloupe contest: 1st Tara Jones, 2nd Jacob Clarke, & 3rd Gary Caldwell. TCFCC’s crew & volunteers did the launching. Some of the Knights also launched a few cantaloupe!

The Medieval Days Dress Up Contest for kids was won by: 1st place Annie Clarke, 2nd Ashtyn Kreft, 3rd Kenzie Kreft, & 4th Macie Pearl. Reva Felix won for the adult category.

The Melon Chunkin’ Festival had its challenges with a muddy arena, but overall was a success!

Thank you to our Sponsors: Colorado Housing and Finance Authority, Total Concept, La Junta State Bank, Thaxton’s Market, Otero County Health Department Tobacco Program, SM Construction, Dianne Willhoite, Connect for Health Colorado, Rocky Ford Discount Tire. Thank you for In-Kind donations to Gobins, Hirakata Farms, Matt Proctor Farms, Sacket Farm Market, Free Will Church, Malcham Muth, Matt Rouleau, Arkansas Valley Lumber and Thunder Media Radio Network.