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68th Annual Rotary Isola Field Day moves to Miramonte

By Sora O'Doherty

For the first time, the Rotary will hold its Isola Field Day for elementary school students to compete in track and field events at Miramonte High School. Co-sponsored by the Miramonte track team, team members will be involved in helping to run the May 5 event and serve as role models for the younger participants.

This free track and field competition, open to all Orinda third- through fifth-graders, was started in 1950 by Frank Isola, a PE teacher and later principal at Orinda Intermediate School, where the gym is named after him. The event was started at the old Pinecrest school, then moved to Del Rey Elementary School where it was held for almost 40 years. Because the event has been running for 68 years, parents and grandparents can watch their children and grandchildren run the same races they did as children.

Students will compete for first, second and third place in individual events, as well as the title of High Point Boy and High Point Girl. The school with the highest combined point total will keep the Field Day trophy for a full year.

Things will kick off at 8 a.m. with athlete arrival, event prep and race bibs. Rotarians will be on hand selling donuts, coffee, snacks, hamburgers, hot dogs and drinks to help defray the costs of the event. Pre-registration is available on the website, but not necessary. Starting at 8:30 a.m. there will be four events for third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders: the 50m dash, the 200m (400 m for fifth-graders), the softball throw and the long jump, plus, from 10:50 to 11:30 a.m., relay races.

Also new this year, according to Field Day Chair Clay Deanhardt, is a new website for the event, www.orindafieldday.org. While the site is currently pretty bare bones, Deanhardt says he will start adding as historical material soon.

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