Bambino’s raises funds to benefit Rountree

By James Hanson

Springfield native Andy Faucett, owner of Bambino’s Café, holds a place in his heart for Rountree Elementary School, where he attended school as a young boy. Over the years, Faucett has held fundraisers for the school and for Jarrett Middle School, Parkview High School and various clubs at Missouri State University.

Faucett said Bambino’s is “a neighborhood restaurant.” "They do nice things for you and you want to do nice things for your neighbors,” he said. “Everyone in this neighborhood has treated Bambino’s very well.” When school kicked off for the 2011-2012 school year, the Rountree Elementary Parent Teacher Student Association held Owlapalooza to continue the group's efforts to upgrade the school’s playground.

The group intends to raise $75,000 for new playground equipment. Phase I of the playground equipment, approximately $35,000, was installed on the playground in January.

Phase II of the project would include new portable soccer goals and implementing a program called “peaceful playground.”

Jackie Carter, vice-president of the Rountree PTSA, said it needs about $500 to complete that phase. “We are about a year ahead of schedule,” she said. “Our goal was to have the playground fully equipped by May 2015, but we are way ahead of schedule. We are planning the second Owlapalooza for August 13, 2012.”

Faucett decided to hold another fundraiser after meeting with Rountree Elementary Association Chairwoman Brian Ash: a Facebook check-in deal for the month of February. Whenever customers eat at Bambino’s and use their smartphone to check in on Facebook, Bambino’s donates $1 to the Rountree Elementary PTSA.

Faucett said Facebook is a fun and new way to try something that hasn’t been done before. “But he said there are some challenges, as some people aren’t Facebook-friendly. Faucett said he is a little unfamiliar with everything Facebook, himself.”

“If people show up and they want to do the check-in but are unable to on their phone or they don’t have a smart phone, we will still donate a dollar in their name and post it on Facebook,” Faucett said.

Carter said the PTSA is thrilled about the partnership with Bambino’s Café.

Sixth-annual Trading Hands Kids Sale set for March 22-24

By James Hanson

Consumers looking for a bargain when shopping for clothing, toys, shoes, baby gear, books, baby furniture and more, can expect to find some deals March 22 through March 24 at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds E-Plex, during the sixth-annual Trading Hands Kids Sale.

Julie Rhoads, sales organizer, said the event provides an opportunity for families to meet growing children’s needs, without breaking the budget.

Rhoads said the event was started in September 2006 at the Expo Center. “It has had a lot of growth and more and more families participating,” she said. “Our main focus is to give families an opportunity to sell their kids’ outgrown clothing and items. And give people an opportunity to buy quality gently used items at a below retail cost. It can really stretch their budget.”

Besides selling and buying, consignors have an opportunity to donate all unsold items to charity. Rhoads said this spring the group is proud to be partnering with the Springfield PTA Clothing Barn and Newborns in Need. She said more than 350 families are expected to participate in this year’s sale.

Rhoads said sales like the Trading Hands Kids Sale are a growing trend across the country. “There are a lot of these sales coming up in big markets as well as smaller towns,” she said. “Economically, it is just one of those things that has grown as a way to help people stretch their dollars further.”

She said people often think the event is only for consignors but that is not the case. “Anybody can come and shop and we are always open to new consignors,” Rhoads said. “If you have a few items or a hundred items we will be glad to help you sell those.”

All items sold are gently used and are closely inspected before being approved for sale.

Consignors set their own prices, shop before the public and receive up to 75 percent of their total sales. Those interested should visit tradinghands.net to register and print their tags for their items.

For more information or to volunteer, call 496-5837.