



Coach: Mud Mountain requires "amazing" volunteer effort each and every year

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - The annual **Mud Mountain** is more than a special event for runners, it is also a huge community fundraising event for the Edwardsville cross country and track and field programs.

Mud Mountain funds not only extra types of things for the high school programs, but those of Liberty and Lincoln Middle Schools in Edwardsville. Mud Mountain raises over \$10,000 each year for the cross country and track and field programs. More than 400 participated in the race this year.

The volunteers are simply "amazing" for the Mud Mountain event, race director and head Edwardsville cross-country coach **George Patrylak** said. In tight financial times economically with all the issues from state funding, Mud Mountain and other fundraising events are vital for cross country and track and field, the coach said.

"I am always overwhelmed by the amount of support from parents for Mud Mountain," the coach said. "We have great overall parental support. I know other programs and schools are envious of the support from Edwardsville parents. It makes me realize how blessed we are at Edwardsville to have the support we do. It is not like that everywhere."

Patrylak said many parents choose Edwardsville School District because of its strong academic curriculum and its sports programs. In turn, many of the parents volunteer with booster clubs for the various sports. Nearly every Edwardsville sport is the same; they receive immense parental booster support.

Dawn Determan and Paula Raffaele led the volunteer efforts for Mud Mountain this year and did a tremendous job, Coach Patrylak said. The two women were experienced from concession efforts last year and Paula even worked one of the water stops. Determan was extremely organized with the entire approach of the event, Patrylak said.

Many who have had runners in the program still come out to help with Mud Mountain, the coach said.

"Jeannie Cullen ran our nurses station and both of her kids are out of college now," Patrylak said. "Patty Gable, Zack Gable's mom, came back to help. Her son is also now in college. A lot of parents are willing to come back and give back to the program even though they are removed from it."

Larry Thompson has traditionally been the main finish line worker for about seven years, the coach said.

"Larry's son, Tony, used to run for us," Patrylak said. "The weekend before Mud Mountain, I had several parents ask me about widening the isles of the course by cutting back trees, limbs and brush. We used clippers, chainsaws and other tools to make sure the course was safer for the athletes to run. They also helped us located all of the pole holders that are part of the course that surrounds the starting line."

Funding from the Mud Mountain and the other fundraisers goes toward warmups, water, equipment, incidentals, travel and much more for the athletes, the coach said.

Patrylak thanked the volunteered who donated their time to make Mud Mountain a success. He said he couldn't be more honored to work in such a great school district.

"I am very blessed to coach here," he said.

