



Devoted Parents Lynette and Craig Watson Carry EHS Craft Fair Leadership Roles Close To Heart

by Adrienne Linden

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EDWARDSVILLE - For the past five years, Lynette and Craig Watson have been the glue that keeps all the pieces together behind the scenes at Edwardsville High School's Band Program's successful Craft Fairs.

The 30th Annual EHS Band Craft Fair will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, November 11, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, November 12, at the Edwardsville High School 6161 Center Grove Road, Edwardsville, IL., 62025.

Music has always been important to both Craig and Lynette. Both were "band kids" growing up and Lynette is an EHS Marching Tiger alum. As parents, they believed that music was important to their children's brain development, character, leadership and work ethic as well as providing supportive social experiences.

Lynette said she once heard a student ask why all the band kids were "weird". Lynette had a great response: "They're not. They're simply allowed to be who they are by their band friends."

She added, "This is an amazing gift for kids this age."

Not only did Lynette and Craig see their two biological children, Reece and Sloan, go through EHS' band program, but also several 'bonus' children. Lynette and Craig made

it their mission to mentor and nurture other children in their lives. As Craig said, “We have seen many kids who were maybe heading in the wrong direction or were 'lost' be surrounded by the band and supported into a better path and an optimistic future.”

Lynette and Craig took over the leadership of the Craft Fair committee immediately after the 2019 fair. Work on the next fair starts the day after the current year’s fair closes. The pair inherited a 25-year tradition of paper-only craft vendor registration.

This meant that a minimum of four exchanges of regular mail to settle contracts, etc. Knowing that the Craft Fair is the band’s largest, and most important fundraiser, it immediately became clear to them that a more streamlined process was needed. They had to consider the longevity of the solution, which would continue to attract vendors and making it easier for them to register, as well as for the parent volunteers who would eventually replace them. Typically, Craft Fair chairs serve a three-to-four-year term.

In 2020, the duo began working on a dynamic new online registration process. When the 2020 Craft Fair was canceled, they creatively used that time to complete the transfer to 21st-century methodology. This served extremely useful when in 2021, a last-minute change of location needed to be communicated. Luckily, in 2022, the Craft Fair returned in full force to its historical site at the Edwardsville High School. The 2023 Craft Fair is anticipated to be as large or larger than pre-pandemic levels with over 275 vendors and 300 booths.

“While we have many of the same terrific vendors for our 2023 Craft Fair,” explained Lynette, “We have lots of new ones, too. For the first time, we will be welcoming a potter. I’m super excited to add this craft. We also have a vendor with live wreaths – they are so pretty and will surely be popular!”

This year’s Director’s Bake-Off dessert is Carrot Cake. Folks can purchase samples and vote on their favorites. Proceeds benefit the Oliver Knapp scholarship fund. And, for the first time, there will be a multi-day pass available at a special price.

Lynette and Craig didn’t limit their time and creativity only to the Band’s Craft Fair. Lynette has managed numerous bake sales and has been the Chaperone Coordinator for competitions and parades. Craig has also been the Marching Tigers’ Chair of Prop Design and Builds for their award-winning competitive shows. This year’s show, “Once Upon the Midnight Hour” had over 60 prop pieces including a wedding cake-like structure nicknamed the BAR (Big *** Riser) which held nearly all of the instrumentalists at the climax of the show.

After nine years of active support and volunteering for the EHS Band program, Lynette and Craig will be “graduating” along with their youngest daughter, Sloan, at the end of the year.

“We are thrilled to have Suzanne Hermann (parent of a freshman) and Jennifer Andrews (parent of a sophomore) working with us this year. Suzanne and Jennifer have great ideas, fresh eyes and enthusiasm and we know our dedicated crafters will be in good hands,” Lynette Watson said.

Lynette had one final message and said no strollers are allowed at the event.

"We do not, and have never have, allowed strollers," added Lynette. "The Edwardsville Fire Marshall ruled that it is just too dangerous. Please do not harass our volunteers."

Admission is \$5 for adults (\$4 for seniors & military veterans). Children 12 & under are free.

Information submitted by Adrienne Linden, Publicity Chair, EHS Band Boosters



