

Classmates of injured snowboarder rally support

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

High Desert Middle School students gather to lend support and raise funds for Tyler Eklund. They may be too young to vote or drive a car, but together the 700 voices at High Desert Middle School are sending a thunderous, heartfelt message to the community - "help us support our friend and classmate, Tyler Eklund.

Tyler Eklund, MBSEF photo At 7:50 a.m. today, cheers of support will rise from the High Desert Auditorium as students rally together for an assembly kicking off their efforts to raise more than \$100,000 for Tyler. The student's 14-year-old classmate was paralyzed when he fell and broke the C-3 vertebra in his neck while training for a USASA National Championship snowboarding competition at Northstar Resort near Lake Tahoe on Sunday, April 1. Eklund was airlifted to Reno and underwent emergency surgery, and remains in the Nevada hospital where medical professionals are closely monitoring his condition. "Tyler and his family may not be able to hear us in Reno, but I know they'll feel the support of his peers as they cheer for Tyler's speedy recovery on Friday," said High Desert principal Gary DeFrang. A slideshow with photos and video of Tyler will be shown during the assembly. DeFrang, Superintendent Doug Nelson and Sparrow Club's Dawnelle Roth will tell stories about Tyler and talk about how students can help. "Tyler's injury has been felt by our entire student body and our community," said DeFrang. "It's our hope that by rallying together as a community, we can show Tyler, and the world, that we are pulling for him." DeFrang says that all funds raised will be donated to the Sparrow Club and redistributed to the Eklund family for their medical needs and care.

Several other fundraising activities on Eklund's behalf are scheduled over the next few weeks, and a donation fund has been established at US Bank in Tyler's name. Visit the Mt. Bachelor Sports Education Foundation web site for details.

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