

3rd Annual Bend Brew Fest Serves up Charitable Twist

by K_Guice

Anyone who loves a quality brew and helping a good cause is invited down to the 3rd annual Bend Brew Fest. It is taking place at the Les Schwab Amphitheater on Friday, August 18 from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday, August 19 from noon to 10 p.m.

“It is a non-judged beer festival featuring beers throughout the northwest and even a bit further this year,” said Marney Smith, director of the Les Schwab Amphitheater. “We will have over 50 brewers. There will be a little of everything no matter what a drinkers taste may be. There are pilsners, stout, lager, everything that is made in the region,” she added.

Photo by George Dwinell Admission to the Bend Fest is free. Once inside, patrons can pay \$5 for a 2006 souvenir mug, which is required for tasting the various brewed treats.

In addition, tasting tokens will be required to purchase beer. Tokens cost \$1 each and are sold in packets of five.

All of the proceeds will benefit Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Oregon.

Chris Justema of Cascades Lakes Brewing Co., based in Redmond, says while the event is a great way to showcase their product, the driving force behind their involvement is the charity.

“It’s the reason we participate,” Justema said. “We are big believers in the charity.”

Smith, who is on the board of directors for the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Oregon, says the festival itself has actually turned into a big recruiting event for the organization as well.

“They have had more people at this event who have signed up to volunteer and actually followed up afterwards, which is the hard part,” she said.

Smith says the organization makes such a big difference in people’s lives. She is pleased that so many people, from patrons to the brewing companies, reach out to help.

“Kids are 60 percent less likely to do drugs that have a big brother or big sister,” she said.

“It makes such a big difference,” Smith said. “They have better self esteem and it gives them a role model that is a positive influence on their lives.”

Speaking of kids, they are invited to come down to the festival until 7 p.m. each night.

“They have to be with a parent or guardian and the parents have to sign a waiver to ensure that their child will not drink alcohol,” Smith added.

In addition, there will be a face painter, balloon artist and a golf swing booth.

Kids and adults alike can also choose from several non-alcoholic beverages. “There will be soda, juices, water and more,” she said.

What would a festival be without food? “We’ll have burgers, Thai food, tacos, really good barbeque as well as confections,” Smith said.

The entire event will be set against great music. Friday the line up includes: Jennifer Lynn, Freak Mountain Ramblers and The Derailers.

Saturday features the School of Rock at noon. Other kids are welcome to join them on the stage.

Other entertainers include: Hogwash, Flat Mountain Girls, Dirty Martini, Stone Soup and Bingo Band.

Smith says the past two years have been a great success. It is no surprise with these types of specialty brewing events, like the Bend Brew Fest and Oregon Brew Fest gaining popularity across the region and the country.

“People are having a great time for a good cause,” said Smith. “All of the money they are spending is going to Big Brothers Big Sisters, so they can drink their favorite beer and do good all in one fail swoop.”

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