

HOOPS & Hoopla Raises Nearly \$145,000 for Chronically Ill Children

Fans' Night Out to Watch the Men's Basketball Semifinals Benefited Morgridge Academy at National Jewish Health

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DENVER — More than 350 people took their brackets to cheer on the remaining men's college basketball teams at HOOPS & Hoopla, a watch party benefiting [Morgridge Academy](#) for chronically ill children. Morgridge Academy is a tuition-free school for students in kindergarten through eighth grades. Students learn to manage their diseases while succeeding academically. The school is located on the campus of National Jewish Health. The April 1 event, presented by Greiner Electric, was held at Infinity Park Event Center in Glendale and raised nearly \$145,000.



Former Denver Nuggets Walter Davis, Ervin Johnson and Mark Randall joined guests to watch the semifinal matchups on 1,600 square feet of monster screens. When people weren't glued to the best of college basketball, they enjoyed a gourmet buffet, open bar, silent auction, casino games, corn hole and arcade games.

Between periods, Master of Ceremonies Ryan Harris, a member of the Denver Broncos offensive line for the Super Bowl 50 Championship team and co-host of 950 AM-Altitude Sports Radio's afternoon program, spoke to the group about what brought everyone together that night.

"Morgridge Academy is a truly special place," Harris said. "Children come to the school with severe asthma and allergies, cystic fibrosis, immune conditions like HIV, and other illnesses. They learn how to manage their diseases effectively and excel academically. They go from sitting on the sidelines to swimming and running with their friends."

Before the second game tipped off, Jennifer McCullough, director of education for Morgridge Academy, took the stage. She explained how several full-time nurses and highly trained teachers help these children conquer their diseases and thrive.

"HOOPS & Hoopla is a fun event and great opportunity to tell people how the school helps children understand and treat their chronic illnesses," said Kris Wintroub, chief financial officer of Greiner Electric and member of the National Jewish Health development board.

Team Builders

Excitement for the event started building in October when eight local businesses, or "teams," began spreading the word about Morgridge Academy and fundraising for their designated Morgridge Academy classrooms. "Coaches," or members of the HOOPS & Hoopla committee, led each team's efforts.

Katherine Hartzler, coach of Team Jet Linx Denver, upped her team's game when she invited the company's class to Centennial Airport for their project-based learning curriculum on community helpers.

“The pilots, crew and maintenance staff met with the students, teaching them about the cockpit, avionics, engines and repair,” Hartzler said. “We then let them climb aboard a few aircraft. For half of them, it was the first time they had ever been on an airplane.”

Powerhouses Coaches

Many of the teams put baskets out at their corporate offices and sold mini basketballs as a fundraiser for their classroom. Competition came to a head at the HOOPS & Hoopla event with only a few remaining hours to out-fundraise the other teams.

When it was all said and done, three powerhouse coaches were presented with awards for their commitment and drive. Wintroub and Tom Tarver, coaches of Team Greiner Electric, were named MVPs for exceeding their previous fundraising record with more than \$65,000 in sponsorships, ticket sales and donations for the event. Hartzler was presented with the Heart of a Champion award for going outside the lines by taking the students to Centennial Airport. Craig Gallogly of Team CED received the Rookie of the Year trophy for his service as a first-year solo coach. He doubled the amount his team raised this year from last year, bringing in nearly \$11,000, out fundraising all other first-year solo coaches.

The entire HOOPS & Hoopla coaching lineup included Brandon Bergholz, *Mortenson Construction Company*; Patrick Fairfield, *UMB*; Peter Fox, *Trautman & Shreve*; Craig Gallogly, *CED*; Bill Gregor, *Mortenson Construction Company*; Katherine M. Hartzler, *Jet Linx Denver*; Jerry Laflen, *BKD, LLP*; Jason Lewis, *CRC Wholesale Group, Denver*; Tom Tarver, *Greiner Electric*; and Kris Wintroub, *Greiner Electric*.

Event sponsors were Full Court Sponsor Greiner Electric; Stats Sponsor CRC Wholesale Group; Sports Bar Sponsor Graybar; Slam Dunk Sponsors BKD, CED, Crescent Electric Supply Company, Mortenson Construction Company and Trautman & Shreve; Beverage Sponsor Breckenridge Brewery and Radio Sponsor Altitude Sports Radio.

For future HOOPS & Hoopla event or sponsorship information, contact Rebecca Reutlinger at ReutlingerR@njhealth.org or visit hoopsandhoopla.com.

Morgridge Academy at National Jewish Health is a unique, free day school for 90 chronically ill students in kindergarten through eighth grades. Its mission is to provide a safe, friendly and healthy school environment where students succeed academically, medically and socially.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 123 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the media resources page.

Media Contacts

Our team is available to arrange interviews, discuss events and story ideas.

Jessica Berry
303.398.1082
berryl@njhealth.org

Sean Andersen-Vie
303.398.1002
andersenvies@njhealth.org