

“Buzz-kins” – Raising Pumpkins to Raise Funds

Each year, Damariscotta pumpkin grower Buzz Pinkham grows giant pumpkins, donating them to Pumpkinfest to ensure that there will be enough of the giant gourds for the festival. This year, there is a new twist—Pinkham will be growing his “Buzz-kins” to help support area non-profits.

Several non-profits which have supported Pumpkinfest in the past through the donation of time, talent and materials, have adopted a Buzz-kin and will participate in the Pumpkin Pledge program. While Pinkham will be responsible for pumpkin growing, the non-profits will collect pledges from their supporters—a penny (or nickel, dime, etc.) a pound for the weight of the pumpkin when it’s weighed during the volunteer weigh-off on October 3. Supporters also may simply donate a pledge of a certain amount to their favorite non-profit.

Coastal Kids, which has adopted Buzz-kin number one, is a long supporter of Pumpkinfest. The children help harvest the seeds of the giant pumpkins after the weigh-off in October each year while learning about gardening and growing the giants. Coastal Kids Executive Director Mimi Reeves is excited about the opportunity to participate in the Pumpkin Pledge program for several reasons. “Watching a pumpkin grow would be a great educational opportunity for our kids,” said Reeves, “and donations will support our program activities in the coming year.” Those interested in supporting the Coastal Kids Buzz-Kin should contact Reeves at mimi@coastalkidsme.org.

Matt Goetting, Development Director of Lincoln Academy, also has committed the school to sponsorship of a Buzz-kin. “Lincoln Academy is thrilled to participate and become a sponsor,” said Goetting. “Lincoln Academy pledge funds can be used to support a number of student activities.” Goetting invites LA supporters to pledge a penny-a-pound towards their Buzz-kin, pumpkin number two, by contacting him at goetting@lincolnacademy.org.

Buzz-kin number three, adopted by Lincoln County Dental, will “to further assist our goal of raising community awareness regarding oral health,” according to Clinical Director Kathryn Young. “The monies we raise [will be] used to support the expense of providing dental care to residents of Lincoln County who are in need.” To support the Lincoln County Dental Buzz-kin, contact Kathryn at kay@denturedesigns.com.

The number four Buzz-kin has been adopted by Mobius. “We would love to do this!” enthused Stacey Simpson, of Mobius. Those who live in and around Damariscotta know what an valuable addition Mobius is to the community. To support the Mobius Buzz-kin, contact Stacey at staceygup@gmail.com.

There are two remaining Buzz-kins up for adoption. Area non-profits who are interested in participating in the Pumpkin Pledge program should contact Sarah Maurer, at sarah@the1812farm.com for details about the program.

Buzz-kins are available for viewing at Pinkham's Plantation, 431 Biscay Road in Damariscotta from 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. daily. In addition, his pumpkin patch (dubbed "the nursery") will be monitored by the Maine Department of Agriculture's "PumpkinCam," which can be accessed from <http://www.maine.gov/dacf/pumpkincam/>, or www.damariscottapumpkinfest.com. Those who are supporting these non-profit organizations can take a peek in the nursery to watch their favorite Buzz-kin grow from the comfort of their homes, and can track how it measures up to the other adoptees. The website also provides tips for growing giant pumpkins and interesting facts about their use.

Pumpkinfest & Regatta™ is a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to promote education to citizens of all ages regarding the specific agricultural science required to grow giant pumpkins, and to provide local non-profit organizations with opportunities for dissemination of information on their activities and fundraising. For more information, visit www.damariscottapumpkifest.com or follow us at www.facebook.com/damariscottapumpkifest.com, or www.twitter.com/squashbuckler. Pumpkinfest is grateful to have *Lincoln County News* as its official news organization sponsor for the 2015 festival.