

NHHS welcomes new students, inaugurates new track



Vice Principal Wayne Stewart, Kelly Leveque of Leveque Brothers Construction, and Principal Ken Dostaler are joined by mentors and Grade 9 members of the school's houses (Earth, Fire, Water, and Wind) as the new track at North Hastings High School is officially opened. / TONY PEARSON Special to This Week

By Tony Pearson

Last year, North Hastings High School (NHHS) no longer had a functioning outdoor track. The original, which encircles the football/soccer pitch, had been rendered unusable by the growth of grass and weeds; the gravel had been scattered, and one corner had subsided below field level.

The school contacted local contractor Leveque Brothers Sand & Gravel, well known for their road and highway construction work. The school asked if the firm could give them a quote for restoring the track. Leveque went one step beyond that, and offered to do the work free of charge. Liking the price, the school quickly agreed. So last spring, the Leveque workers levelled the field, re-measured the track, brought in and laid down a new gravel surface.

Asked why the firm had made the donation, Kelly Leveque stated simply that they wanted to help keep young people active. Since the track is used not just by school teams, but is available for public use after school hours, Leveque also said it was a contribution to the fitness of the broader community.

Last Friday, Kelly Leveque joined principal Ken Dostaler, vice principal Wayne Stewart, and the new Grade 9 students to dedicate the new track. The occasion was Grade 9 welcoming day at the school. All day long, the Grade 9s, under the guidance of their student mentors, took part in a variety of activities to win points for their new 'houses.' Like Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, NHHS is divided into four houses, into which all the students are slotted (but apparently without the use of the Sorting Hat). The houses 'Earth, Wind, Fire, and Water' then compete all year long in academics, attendance, athletics, arts, and special events.

On Friday, the activities included developing a house logo and a cheer, as well as various contests of skill on the athletic field, such as Frisbee toss and capture the flag. The day concluded with the entire school taking part in the renowned egg toss.

Principal Dostaler explained that the purpose of the day is not just to provide a positive introduction to high school, but to bond students together for the school year ahead. With more senior students mentoring the Grade 9s, he expanded, the grades mix. The overall objective is inclusion, with the whole student body buying in to the range of school programs.