

Friday night lights bright at New Trier Winter Carnival



From left, Josh Park of Northfield, Keenan Yoseph of Winnetka and Michael Ashman of Glencoe avoid the ball in the Knock 'Em Off/Kids on Beams attraction. (Karie Angell Luc, Pioneer Press)

The event was staffed by 1,000 seniors with faculty and community support.

Friday night lights were bright and indoors Feb. 20 at the 21st Annual New Trier Winter Carnival, where hundreds of people from the greater North Shore were welcomed to 385 [Winnetka Ave.](#)

"The winter carnival is a great opportunity to interact with New Trier seniors to raise a lot of money for Habitat for Humanity," said David Ringel, 18, of [Glencoe](#) and a senior.



Ringel is a New Trier High School senior project leader with Habitat for Humanity and greeted guests Feb. 20 at the event, which was staffed by New Trier's 1,000 seniors with faculty and community support.

"The Habitat for Humanity is a great charity for us to partner with because it helps provide housing for people who otherwise might not have it," Ringel said.

On Feb. 28, New Trier senior advisors and advisor chairs will attend a groundbreaking ceremony at the [Waukegan](#) Habitat for Humanity residential building work site.

"In six months, we'll be able to drive out to Waukegan and say, 'We built that house!'" Ringel said.

The Lake County family who will reside in that new home attended the Winter Carnival, Ringel said. The family is headed by a single working mother with two boys and one girl.

Most of the construction will be done by seniors.

"It teaches us how to do a practical task," Ringel said. "It really makes fundraising a lot more fun when you see the end goal."

As Ringel spoke near the front entrance welcome center, excited guests and families with strollers navigated the corridors with maps.

The gyms featured attractions such as Human Bowling and Knock 'Em Off/Kids on Beams.

That is where Grady Evert, 6, of Winnetka and a Crow Island School student, sat on a catapult device that triggered a ball flying at New Trier students. Josh Park of Northfield, Keenan Yoseph of Winnetka and Michael Ashman of Glencoe were teen targets.

"Oh my God, we love it!" Grady's mother, Cheryl Evert, said of the carnival. "It's perfect for our little kids!"

Meanwhile, others got to the church on time at the third floor Marriage Chapel, where all were wed in combinations of couples, from little tikes on up to best friends forever.

Future newlyweds could borrow top hats or veils and bouquets, too. An aisle runner led to a lighted arch, where the preacher awaited to administer vows.

"This is the biggest ring I ever got!" said Laura Weiss of Wilmette, who renewed her vows with her husband, Rob Salkin.

"It feels like the first time," said Salkin of re-marrying his wife of "23 glorious years!"

Her ring was "genuine sugar," he said, with a laugh, of the obligatory Ring Pop offering candy karat sweetness.

Taylor Dunlap, 16, an NTHS sophomore from Wilmette, visited the Marriage Chapel with Rylee Gabriel, 15, of Glenview and a Regina Dominican High School sophomore.

"You're my favorite person," Rylee said to Taylor.

"I'm glad I met you!" Taylor said to Rylee.

Albert Merrill, 11, revealed his real last name is Kulanko.

But Albert took Owen Merrill's last name for fun after the two best buds shook hands. They're both middle school students from Wilmette.

Owen said, "It felt like a milestone, very awesome" after pronouncing their friendship before the preacher.

Their next stop was ideally a honeymoon in Walt Disney World or Egypt, they said.

More practical might be slice-of-life wedding cake. Owen and Albert could have headed down the hall for a chance at winning the Cup Cake Walk.

Otherwise, downstairs, Owen and Albert might pass other fun distractions like the Hula Hoop Contest or Flower Pot Desserts, where Ariana Reyes of Waukegan accompanied Esmerelda Villalobos, 9, Jonathan Ayon, 5, and Jesus Ayon, 6.

"I like it," Reyes said. "It's an adventure for the kids to enjoy."

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