

Rave reviews greet renovated Wildcat Wellness Center - February 2, 2017

by David Johnson, Milton Times

The audience, including Wildcats and their fans alike, roared their approval of the new Milton High School wellness center at its official opening Jan. 24.

As he demonstrated how to use barbells for visitors, MHS junior Alex Merrill said he liked the state of the art equipment in the center, which represents a modern version of the traditional weight room.

The Milton Foundation for Education, or MFE, was the lead sponsor of the facility, with other donations from the Weymouth Club, the Boosters Club, the Evan Jones Memorial Fund, Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital-Milton and numerous individuals.

High School Principal James Jette welcomed the crowd, saying the center will help reduce athletic injuries by keeping students in good shape. "You can see the momentum," Jette said. "It helps us."

MHS principal for five years, Jette said the wellness center is open and accessible for all the nearly 1,000 high school students, male and female. In the past, use of the weight room was largely limited to football players and other serious athletes.

"It is important to prevent lifetime injuries," he said, moving his crutches behind him. Jette was injured in a serious car accident last spring. "This lifestyle results in fewer sick days."

English teacher Steve Collyer told the crowd to "ride the wave and realize the potential of the Wildcat Wellness Center." He said the facility has already improved student morale. "There's a lot of talk about it, a lot of energy, a lot of pride," he said. "Our program options are limitless – let's do this."

School Committee member Kristan Bagley Jones, whose son Evan died several years ago of sudden unexplained death due to epilepsy, said he would have loved the new center. "Evan would be so happy," she said. She said since students could not use the weight room without supervision in the past, the facility was often closed.

The fund set up in her son's memory, the Evan Jones Memorial Fund, has paid for a trainer, Ted Kackley, to be in the wellness center four afternoons a week, making it accessible for many students.

During the opening, about 75 people strolled through the new rooms, which included weights, aerobic and cardio equipments. Guests enjoyed refreshments provided by Jackie Morgan and the school food service department, while the high school band, Cellar Dwellers, played a series of popular songs in their trademark jazz fusion style.

For more information on the MFE, visit www.miltonfoundationforeducation.org or write to P.O. Box 223, Milton, MA 02186.

Donation to the Evan Jones Memorial Fund, may be sent c/o The Boosters Club, Milton High School, 25 Gile Road, Milton, MA 0216.