

**National Archery in the Schools Program**  
**Mathews Web and Newsletter**  
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## **Family Fun...ding of the NASP**

The *National Archery in the Schools Program's* (NASP) Director of Governmental & Business Affairs and my friend, Tom Bennett is on my heart as I write this. Tom is in an intensive care facility at this very moment, fighting for his life. The number of family and friends waiting, pulling, and praying for Tom surely outnumbers the staff at this very large Louisville hospital!

Those who are privy to the very beginnings of the NASP will recall that it was Tom's desire that archery become a high school sport in Kentucky, that lead to the creation of the NASP. In those days, Tom was the very successful Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources (KDFWR). Like so many other leaders of conservation organizations, he was concerned about the continued decline in time being spent by our youth with wild things in wild places. If youth can't be inspired to get off the couch and away from the computer for awhile, stewardship of fish and wildlife resources will be in jeopardy. Somehow the cool-factor of outdoor-type skills needed to be increased.

Tom's desire has become the reality of the *National Archery in the Schools Program*. Since its inception, at least 3.2 million young people in grades 4-12 have ventured from their computers and cell phones long enough to learn the skill of NASP-style target archery. Tom graduated (retired) from the KDFWR a couple of years ago and joined the full-time NASP staff (we are two) to help strengthen and sustain the effort. A primary role is to help the few remaining state agencies who don't lead the NASP in their state, to answer the call. Additionally, Tom is determined to help those who should be supporting the NASP's mission make the decision to do so.

Just a couple months ago Tom piloted an effort in a Frankfort, Kentucky school to determine if a "banquet model" fund raiser could work for schools and students in the NASP. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Middle School, Tom teamed with teacher Lisa Frye and her husband and many others, to plan a fund-raising evening for the kids and their families. More than 200 people attended the banquet, watched the children practice their archery skills, and bid on silent and live auction items. This school needed to make a few hundred dollars to replace arrows and buy another bow or target or two. The school

also hoped to raise enough money to help a neighboring school join the NASP. Thanks to many local businesses and parents the inaugural event was a huge success,. The fund raiser netted \$8,000 -- \$3,000 more than the goal they set for themselves.

The recipe for this fundraising idea is going to be canned and shared with 4,700 NASP schools this fall. Not only will the schools be able to afford replacement equipment, some will help new schools join. These funds can also be used to promote after school shooting activities including attendance to state and national NASP tournaments. A great thing about the archery banquet concept is that every time an archery class and their parents graduate and move on, a new group of young people will be coming into the program. Having been to many similar style events in the name of elk, turkey, ducks, and quail, I am pleased to report that I've never seen so many children and young parents at such an affair. This fundraising concept will work as long as there are young people and families who care about them.

Tom is also working with a number of large conservation-minded retail organizations such as *Bass Pro*, *Cabela's*, *Academy of Sports*, *Sportsman's Warehouse*, and *Dick's Sporting Goods*. Many of the leaders of these great outlets are strong conservationists. Together they share a huge interest in seeing young people become great citizens and participants in the shooting sports. NASP's strategy when working with corporate donors like these is to generate matching grants for schools to buy NASP equipment. In a survey of state NASP coordinators this past winter, it was determined that 2,816 new schools would join the NASP if they could get \$500 grants towards their \$2,800-\$3,100 equipment kit. In the near future we hope to announce a strategy that involves businesses like the ones listed above, providing annual grants for new schools near each of their "stores". Students at these schools might also be invited to be special guests at these stores to practice after-school archery.

What will the future bring? Of course none of us know—neither for our personal or our professional lives. Of course we should strive to treat each other like we'd like to be treated. We can pray for wisdom and the ability and help to implement it. In the NASP we will keep our eye on the arrow as it leads us to the important element in this effort, and that's **back** to the student who launched it.

As always, if you want to help us at the NASP, help a teacher bring archery lessons to a career's worth of students, let us know by contacting us at [www.archeryintheschools.org](http://www.archeryintheschools.org).

Oh, and remember Tom in your prayers.