

LHS girls basketball gives back to community



Louisburg junior coaches (from left) Sienna Finch, Kenna Cooley, Jenna Cauthon and Megan Quinn pose with the Louisburg girls basketball team in the locker room Friday following their homecoming victory over Eudora.

In the life of a high school athlete, there never seems to be enough time to do everything.

After a full day of school, there is practice, then back home for dinner and homework – or in some cases it is off to a part-time job. Then you get up and start it all over again.

It is a vicious cycle.

But for the Louisburg High School girls basketball team, the players have given up some of that precious time to give back to the Louisburg community.

Whether it was a trip to a skilled nursing facility to help put up Christmas decorations or talking to a group of elementary school girls, the Lady Cat players and coaches want to make sure they are seen more than in just a gymnasium.

“What’s great about the kids in our program, school and community is that they genuinely care about helping others and

take a great deal of pride in doing it together,” Louisburg coach Shawn Lowry said.

The Lady Cats’ most recent activity was on Feb. 2 when they met with the fourth-grade girls at Broadmoor Elementary School. Lowry asked his players to prepare presentations to give to the students.



Lady Cat players (from left) Megan Roy, Paige Buffington and Mikayla Quinn teach a group of fourth-graders the LHS fight song on Feb. 2 at Broadmoor Elementary School.

The presentations included what their game days are like and what it means to be a part of a team. Lowry wanted his players to tell the girls what playing basketball meant to them and what it was like to be a Lady Cat.

They also taught the fourth-graders the school fight song and signed autographs as the players handed out their own playing cards.

“It was such an eye opening day because I realized how badly I want to go back and do it all over again as a fourth grader looking to the future,” senior Megan Lemke said. “I loved visiting with them, answering their questions and giving them motivation to commit to basketball. I love the legacy Lady Cat

basketball has built.”

The day wasn't done as the players picked a student from each fourth-grade class to serve as a junior coach for last Friday's homecoming game against Eudora. Jenna Cauthon, Sienna Finch, Kenna Cooley and Megan Quinn were selected to sit behind the bench during the game.

Life as a junior coach was a busy one as all four girls went into the locker room before the game and they stood with the team captains during the official's meeting. They were then introduced before the game and stood in the team circle as the starters were announced.

As luck would have it, the junior coaches also got to go into the locker room following the contest and celebrate after the Lady Cats' 27-25 win. The final step was to go out with Lowry for the post-game interview with the media.

“The best part was watching them come together as a team and get a win,” Quinn said.

“I really liked that they showed a lot of teamwork,” Cooley added.

Although everyone was happy about the win, the team will always remember the celebration in the locker room.

“Having the junior coaches with us was very special and I don't think any of us will soon forget the smiles on their faces in our locker room after the game,” Lowry said.

“This was a really great experience for our girls and they had a blast doing it. I was impressed with how attentive and interactive the fourth-grade girls were and what a great job our girls did with them. This process also helped our girls better understand my comments about those young girls that watch them to see how they act because they want to be them when they get to high school.”

Speaking to elementary students was just one of a few different things the Lady Cats have done this past two months.



The LHS girls basketball team poses together after they helped decorate Louisburg Healthcare and Rehab for Christmas in December.

Around the holidays, the team made the trip to Louisburg Healthcare and Rehab to put up Christmas decorations and visit with residents. In January, the Lady Cats also helped run the Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest.

“Giving back to the community brings us closer to each other and closer to the people who live in Louisburg,” Lemke said. “When we put up decorations at the nursing home we get to bond as teammates and visit with the residents. It makes us all grateful to be able to help.”

Although the Lady Cats didn’t realize it at the time, they would get rewarded for their efforts later. On Thursday, the team was informed that it was chosen as the KCTV5 and Hy-Vee Team of the Week.

The Kansas City television station taped the short award ceremony later that afternoon to the excitement of everyone on the team.



The LHS girls basketball team lets out a scream Thursday when they were presented with the Hy-Vee Team of the Week award.

It was quite the week for the Lady Cats. One that started talking with a gym full of fourth-grade girls, then received an award, picked up a big win Friday with the help of their four junior coaches and then watched as their teammate, Megan Roy, was crowned as homecoming queen.

Even if they didn't get the team honor earlier in the week, the Lady Cats realized they have already been rewarded – and then some.

“I think it's very important to give back because it shows that being a team player goes beyond the court,” Lemke said. “We get to apply our hard work and dedication by giving back to others. Then we get to share those memories together.”