

Officials react to potential problems with student fights

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the ring where there's lines not to cross. I'm going to buy a wrestling mat with the next money so we don't get slammed on hard ground any more. I ended up pocketing, like, 20 bucks myself," said James.

However, Mr. Henderson said that what the money is being used for makes no

difference. Anything bought by James to set up for the fights is still his property and would still be considered monetary gain. If the fights were determined to be a way of making monetary gain,

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**Josh James
Senior**

then holding the fights without a license would be a class B misdemeanor, according to Mr. Henderson.

Zoning laws are another potential issue of legality. Floyd County Zoning and Planning Commissioner Joe Diehl said that everywhere in the county is zoned for agricultural or residential use, and a new business must go before the zoning board to get the zoning changed for that business.

James said he and the people attending the fight are not aware of any laws they may have broken.

"I'm not worried about it. There's nothing illegal I'm doing," said James.

Other participants felt the same way. "I don't think I'm breaking any (laws)," said senior Thomas McNulty, who competed in one of the fights.

However, civil liability issues could arise

if a serious injury were to occur.

"Do they have a first aid kit there readily available? How are they going to handle it if somebody gets knocked out, with a neck injury? Probably two-thirds of the people that are there have little to no basic first aid skills," said Officer Sams.

If an injury were to occur and the injured

person or the injured person's parents decided to file a lawsuit, the owners of the home at which the fights took place may be held responsible.

Homeowners are not the only people who could face legal difficulties.

"Anybody that is there could be sued. If you're there and there's a lawsuit filed, I mean, number one, you are a potential witness to testify in the civil matter. If you're there, there's nothing that says that you can't be sued," said Officer Sams.

Even students' parents that are aware of the fights beforehand could be held liable.

"There's a law in Indiana--if the parent knows about their son or daughter participating in a fight, even with consent, and someone gets their nose broken, the parent is on the hook," said personal injury lawyer Irvan Sonne.

According to Mr. Sonne, the owners of the home at which fights occurred could face not only civil liability problems, but also problems with homeowners' insurance if an injury resulted from an organized fight on their property.

"If they're knowing this type of behavior is going on, I'm not saying it's criminal behavior, but it's an act that could put somebody in danger. And their insurance company is probably going to have a problem with it," said Officer Sams.

If an injury occurred on the property, hospital costs likely would not be covered by homeowners' insurance.

"Normally if a negligible act happens on your property, they (the insurance company) won't give coverage for an intentional act or conduct," said Mr. Sonne.

James said his parents are aware of the fights that took place at their house and provided supervision for the event. Numerous attempts to contact James' parents were unsuccessful. Other parents were not as comfortable with the idea, though.

"They (my parents) didn't know that I was actually going to be in a fight. At first they didn't mind, but then my dad thought about it and decided it wasn't that great of an idea," said senior Kristen Cain.

McNulty's parents reacted similarly.

"My mom thinks it's stupid, and we're just wrestling around. She thinks someone can get seriously hurt. She didn't really approve," said McNulty.

James considers the fights safe enough that they are better than alternative choices for teenagers on Friday nights.

"We love boxing, wrestling, and we thought we could mix them together, have something fun for students to do other than drugs and alcohol and major organized sports," said James.

James said he plans to hold another event in the near future, though next time it will be at a different location.

Additional reporting by Carter Johnson.

Student council revives coat drive for homeless veterans, families

Kristy Hentchel

Student council organized a coat drive that started Nov. 15 in order to help out homeless veterans and their families this holiday season. Coats will be taken to Interlink Counseling Services Inc. to be distributed throughout the community.

The coat drive was re-established after not having it for two years. Senior Destiny White chaired the Coat Drive Committee, and seven student council members were a part of the committee as well.

"I'm really happy we ended up doing the coat drive because I think student council needs to set an example in the community service that they do," said White.

In putting together the coat drive, members put up flyers and contacted local media outlets.

"I put up signs, faxed FOX 41, and the *Courier Journal*. [Senior] Jenna Nash talked to the *Tribune*," said White.

In addition to the coats that FCHS collected, they were also able to gain community support by encouraging citizens to drop off coats at Nu Yale stores. Nu Yale partnered up with the student council and agreed to place boxes in many of the locations and clean the coats.

"Every year different organizations call us to collect coats and this year the FC Student Council asked us to help. The coats go

to the veterans, and this is really important now, especially with all that's going on in the world," said Nu Yale co-owner Mike Maloney.

The coat drive ended Dec. 3. The committee is not sure how many coats they have

had donated, but is happy with the support.

"I think it's been a great way to help our community," said senior Jenna Nash. "The school as well as the community have responded well."



Photo by Kristy Hentchel.

Seniors Jenna Nash and Destiny White sort through coats outside the office in a hallway. The coats have been collected to go to homeless veterans and their families during this holiday season.