

New club for adults hitting the skating rink for fun and fitness

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

Nearly everyone above the age of 40 can remember having a fun outing at the skating rink as a child. Skating is not as popular as it once was, but Ole Skool Skaters (OSS) is seeking to change that for adults in the Winston-Salem area. OSS will hold an event every second Saturday of the month at Skateland USA of Clemmons, located at 2512 Neudorf Rd.

Donald Scales, president of OSS, came up with the idea because he was looking for a way to get more adults above the age of 40 active while also having fun. He connected with Christina Werts, vice president of OSS, and soon afterward they started the group. The group is for skaters of all skill levels and the only qualification is that you are over the age of 40.

"He (Scales) came up to me one day and he was like, 'You know I'm thinking about trying to find something to do for our age group' and I said okay and he said he wanted to start a skating group and again I said 'okay,'" said Werts about the initial conversation about the group. "I asked him why he wanted to start a skating group and he said, 'Well you know, that's where we spent our childhood, we grew up in the 80s.'"

Werts felt it was a good idea and told Scales to start the group on Facebook and



Submitted photos courtesy Lil Red Photography by Morris

Ole Skool Skaters is a new skating club for adults 40 and older.

she would assist him in his efforts. What started off as a small idea quickly took on a life of its own as more and more people began to join the group. More than 2,000 people have joined the group in less than two months.

"Before we knew it, people were just joining and joining and it just grew," she said. "Everybody was saying they were joining because they wanted something to do. If you don't go to the club or anything like that, we really didn't have anything to do. Everybody just started buying skates and posting them on the page."

For their first event back in July, the group needed 40 people to show

up and pay the \$10 entry fee to make sure they covered the cost of renting the rink. The group was nervous about having enough people show up to cover the cost. Surprisingly enough, more than 100 people showed up for the event, letting organizers know the group is bigger than they thought.

"We were very surprised, because we are in our 40s and 50s, so we didn't think a lot of people would want to skate, because we don't heal like we used to," Werts said with a smile. "Everybody was excited and people were showing everyone their skates and going to the skating rink during the week practicing, trying to get themselves together for the next event. Everyone was so enthusiastic about it and it was just awesome. It surprised us."

For their second event held on Aug. 14, Werts wanted to include a community aspect to the event. The group collected school supplies that will be given to the Enough is Enough nonprofit organization for distribution on Aug. 21.

"I feel like if you can go and buy skates, you can help someone who doesn't have food or doesn't have clothing, you know just to help somebody else," she continued. "That's when

we decided to do the back-to-school drive.

"A lot of people are still suffering from the pandemic and not able to provide for their children. We really want to continue to give to the community and one of ideas is to bring skating back and make it more popular, so maybe these children will start enjoying skating and maybe that will get them out of these gangs and shooting each other."

Werts says they have skaters of all levels in the group, so if anyone is not a good skater, they have the resources to assist them. She stated there is no need to be shy, because everyone has to start somewhere in order to become a good skater.

Werts says they are somewhat apprehensive about the progress of the group due to the rising COVID-19 cases in the state. She feels people are not quite ready to be in public places with other people right now.

"We had a good crowd last night, but we didn't have as big a crowd as

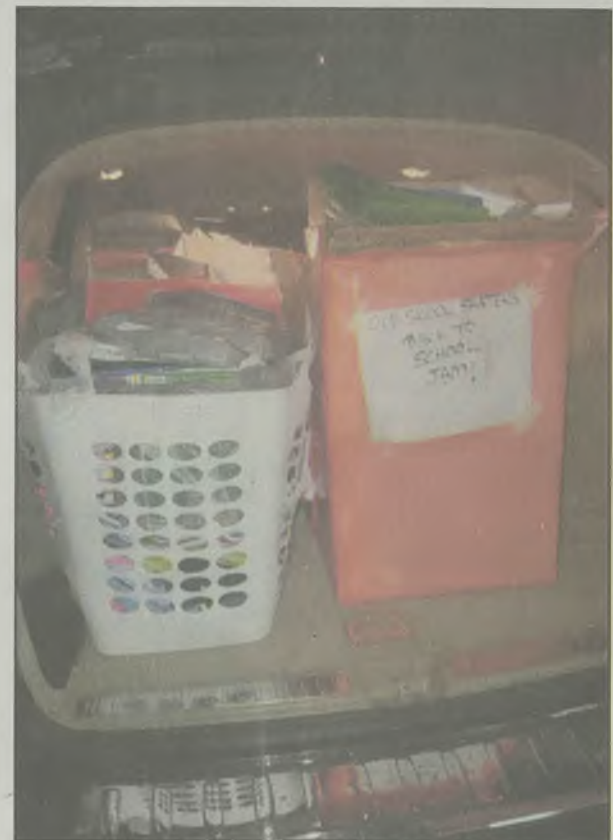
we thought, because the pandemic cases are on the rise again and people were fearful of coming to a group event," she stated. "We are also going to try and list places where people can skate outside. There are greenways and parks around the city with flat asphalt and concrete. We are going to keep pushing it, because it is good for fitness as well."

The next event will be held on Sept. 11 and the theme will be NFL Saturday and OSS wants ev-

eryone to represent their favorite NFL team. They will also honor the victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Because the group has grown so fast, they would like to branch out and have different chapters in other cities and states. They are actually outgrowing their current venue at Skateland, so they may have to relocate sooner than later.

For more information about Ole Skool Skaters, please visit their social media page on Facebook.



During their last event, the club collected school supplies to be donated to a local nonprofit.



Donald Scales, president, and Christina Werts, vice president, are the founders of Ole Skool Skaters.

Hanes

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district use the 21-acre property on Indiana Avenue to house different programming needs. He also discussed ways the district could partner with the city.

"When we come back with the plan ... there's going to be a piece of that that I want to save for community use. So maybe the Lowrance portion will be a medical clinic space, conference room meeting space, and then we've talked about converting the kitchen into a teaching kitchen and working with some partners to come in to teach folks how to cook food, can food, and do that on weekends and after hours so it gets that community use," Walker said. "I know it's not exactly what they want, but it is a bit of an olive branch to put out there."

Walker said district staff plans to speak with architects and develop-

ers over the next few weeks and come back to the board with a recommendation next month. He also mentioned that a new air quality study has been conducted in the area.

If the board does decide to repurpose the facility, according to Walker it would need about \$5 million in repairs. Right now The Little Theatre of Winston-Salem, a local performing arts organization, is leasing space in the building.

Elisabeth Motsinger, who is the longest serving member on the board of education, said she would like to see the district reclaim the building and let the community know that the building is safe.

"It's important that we all learn that these buildings are good buildings and they're usable buildings," Motsinger continued. "I think it's really important, educating our community that these kinds of plumes are under most of the city

of Winston-Salem and it's important that we reclaim these areas. One of my biggest reasons for making a big deal about that is that if we don't learn about this, we will never build schools in cities again and that would be a terrible, terrible travesty against our children."

Dana Caudill Jones, who serves as chair of the building and grounds committee, said she hopes that the district can find a way to partner with the city on repurposing the facility.

"I think Mrs. Burke brought up some great things that the community needs," Jones said. "My hope is that we can have some conversation around this property so it fits the needs that the district needs, but yet it fits the needs that Councilwoman Burke has brought up and I think if we can do something like that, then it's a win for the whole community."

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