

The Happy Court

The Board Members of the Bellingham Pickleball Club (BPC) are excited to convey a unique community pickleball concept; developing a neighborhood pickleball court.

The idea took hold when Bob and Kim Hei spied an unused corner of playground at the school property which houses the Family Partnership Program (formerly Larrabee Elementary School in Fairhaven). We met with school Principal Baehr, neighborhood mover-and-shaker-neighbor Wendy Scherrer, the district building supervisor, members of the Happy Valley Neighborhood Association, and our construction project leader - Marvin Sargent – to ascertain feasibility and interest. With these contacts on board we located funding, products for the court construction, lined up volunteers from the BPC, and submitted a flushed-out proposal to the School District's Community Support Projects program. Their charter is stated as assisting *"Procedures for building or school enhancements through volunteer work, donation, outside funding or sponsor/partnership contributions. The Buildings and Grounds Department is responsible for the oversight of all district facilities."* To our delight, the proposal was readily accepted without change and the work commenced.

The site had a well-worn asphalt playground area with many imperfections. We excavated weeds and dirt, scrubbed, and power washed multiple times. Next, we put down pails of thick tar, jugs of liquid tar, and covered over with multiple layers of a commercial grade pickleball court sand/acrylic coating that would fill and smooth out the many small holes and voids, as well as to create the appropriate playing surface.



Next came the 3 layers of commercial pickleball court paints.



Finally, it was time for dimensional measuring, taping, and final line painting. BPC members: Pat, Dave M., Peter, Steve H., assisted neighborhood residents/BPC members Marvin, Chuck, Karen, Kim, and Bob in putting

the court into a usable playing condition and, after a few days, the neighbors christened the schools new venue "The Happy Court". The project took us about 1.5 months and about \$1,500 in materials.



It is our intention that the court's use is primarily for the students of the Family Partnership Program and the Happy Valley neighborhood; especially the kids. We're working with the Phys-Ed teacher to give lessons for the school children starting this fall and hope to extend some opportunities for individuals with special needs, via a Special Olympics concept, the Max Higbee Center, or other entity.



Court times are regulated by the posted school operational hours. Should you choose to bring your family to play, we request that you use the ONIX 2, or other soft (quiet), ball as a matter of courtesy to nearby residents. Your play is likely to be infused by other families and/or the many kids and neighbors that are now hooked on

pickleball. The Happy Court mantra: Be Kind!, Respectful!, Friendly!, Always Try!, and – of course – Be Happy!, as you're in our Valley.

Lastly, we hope this model can be a prototype for other neighborhoods and, that, continued respectful use within our community.



Bob Hei