

NACHAND FIELD HOUSE



JOHN H. SCHNATTER NACHAND FIELDHOUSE



Restoring History

By Kyle Sanders

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At 601 E. Court Ave in downtown Jeffersonville sits one of the city's most historic buildings: the Nachand Fieldhouse.

This building, which used to hold Jeff High's basketball games until 1971, is now seen as a place for friends to have a great time and hangout. However after being around for 80 years, the Fieldhouse has fallen in need of renovation.

The city of Jeff had visions of saving the historic gym, but would require major work, both inside and outside of the building, that would cost upwards of \$1.8 million.

While this goal seemed impossible months ago, a recent donation from one of Jeffersonville's most famous citizens has turned this pipedream into a reality.

"This location (the Fieldhouse) holds a special place in my heart," said John Schnatter, JHS alumni, and founder and CEO of Papa John's Pizza. "I grew up watching sports here as a kid, including local legends like Indiana's Mr. Basketball, Mike Flynn. Jeffersonville has been good to me and I wanted to show my support for the community."

Schnatter's donation of \$800,000 brings the Fieldhouse closer to meeting its goal of \$1.8 million. Once this amount is reached, it will be renovated by the Jeffersonville Parks Department's workgroup, Save the

Fieldhouse.

The workgroup plans to use the money to pay for exterior brick work, restoration of the front facade, replacement and upgrades to both electrical system and bathroom, as well as replacing the heating system while adding air conditioning.

"I think it's wonderful," said Charlie Nachand, son of former Jeff Parks Director Charles Nachand. "Without a donation like this, we would have no chance of reaching the \$1.8 million we need to."

Thanks to Schnatter's donation, the Jeff Parks Department chose to add the southern Indiana native's name to the historic fieldhouse, which will now be known as the John H. Schnatter-Nachand Fieldhouse.

"We were tasked to determine the fate of the John H. Schnatter-Nachand Fieldhouse," explained Bill Burns, president of the Jeffersonville Park's Authority. "At our first meeting, we knew the only option was to restore the building. Out of that, (the) workgroup born the thought of a private-public partnership to raise the

\$800,000. This generous amount was donated by JHS alumni John Schnatter to renovate not only Jeffersonville's old high school, but one of the city's most historic buildings: the Nachand Fieldhouse.



money to restore the Fieldhouse.

"This project has been one of the most rewarding project I have had the privilege to work with," Burns continued. "I never dreamed that the Fieldhouse had touched so many lives."

According to the Parks Department, the Fieldhouse serves more than 15,000 people annually. Through the basketball and volleyball leagues, summer programs and Zumba lessons, the Fieldhouse still is in use to this day.

"I go to the Fieldhouse all the time," said senior Tyler Wheeler. "These renovations will help bring in more people to play basketball with, and make the Fieldhouse even better than it already is."

The John H. Schnatter-Nachand Fieldhouse is a historic building in Jeff that'll continue to live on, and is expected to remain open throughout the renovations.



all photos submitted

(Top Right): Park Authority President Bill Burns, Mayor Mike Moore, and Papa John's CEO John Schnatter attend the unveiling of the newly-name Fieldhouse.

(Bottom Left): A rendering of what the 'Save the Fieldhouse' workgroup hopes for the future of the Fieldhouse, once renovations are completely finished.