

Bellingham Herald

Estimated printed pages: 2

May 16, 2002

Section: Local

Page: 3A

Pumpkin patch bears financial fruit

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MOUNT BAKER: Site expected to produce 3,400 plants that will be sold to raise money for hospice.

BY EMILY WEINER

THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

On Saturday, children and adults can help Whatcom Hospice by planting pumpkin seeds at Barkley Pumpkin Patch, a fund-raising event gearing up for its second year.

Sal Vacca, who is again leading the volunteer effort, said the goal is to put 3,400 pumpkin plants in the ground on the one-acre field opposite Barkley Village.

Last year, about 1,200 gourds were planted, and others were contributed by local farmers.

This season, 325 dahlia plants have been put in the ground. An honor-system flower shed, handmade by volunteer Steve Intveld, will be ready for customers starting in late July. Pumpkins will be on sale from Oct. 14 to Halloween.

Last year, the pumpkin project raised more than \$16,000 for Whatcom Hospice Foundation from sponsorships, donations and sales.

School children will again help with the planting effort. Already scheduled in June are Vicki Niles' fourth-grade class and Tiffany Gutierrez's fifth-grade class at Roosevelt Elementary School and Chris Andresen's second-grade class at Geneva Elementary School.

On Oct. 19, the Barkley Autumn Trail Run and Festival will again be held at the pumpkin patch, with pony rides, food vendors, pumpkin sales and games for children.

Barkley Pumpkin Patch is supported by Talbot Investment Co., which owns and is developing Barkley District, and many other local businesses.

Pitch in on planting

The public is invited to the corner of Woburn Street and Barkley Boulevard at 10 a.m. Saturday to plant pumpkin seeds at Barkley Pumpkin Patch, a fund-raising event for Whatcom Hospice. Participants should wear gloves and bring a tool to dig a small hole in the ground. Details: Sal Vacca, 676-0109, or <http://www.hospicehelp.org>.

PHILIP A. DWYER HERALD PHOTO

PLOWING CHARITABLE GROUND: Larry Rehberger of LC Tractor Works of Ferndale volunteers his time and tractor preparing the 4,800-square-foot lot on Barkley Boulevard in Bellingham to be planted with pumpkins for the Barkley Pumpkin Patch to raise money for Whatcom Hospice.

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