

Skating centers join forces in relief efforts for Japan

By Jan Mowle

Bill Hoefler of Interskate 91 North in Hadley, Mass., saw all of the devastation from the earthquake and tsunami that took place in Japan in March and decided he wanted to make a difference. As word spread, other rinks joined in to form a national roller skating fundraising effort.

Dubbed "Rolling for Relief," participating rinks across America offered special skating sessions in April, with proceeds slated for Japanese relief efforts. At press time, the hope was to present the money collected to an American Red Cross representative during the Roller Skating Association's Annual Convention and Trade Show in Orlando, Fla., May 1-4.

The idea first came to fruition when Hoefler woke up March 11th and turned on the television. Like the rest of us, he saw that Japan had experienced an 8.9 magnitude earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

"I saw images that the world had never seen before," he said. "Helicopters and airplanes were recording unimaginable waves of destruction that were being broadcast to

the world." He added, "Even in the Indonesian tsunami, we did not see coverage of the events, step by step, as they occurred. How could I not be moved?"

That very morning, he created an e-mail, fired off the details of his relief idea and made some phone calls. Several days later, he realized that if an organized effort was to be accomplished within the roller skating industry, he wanted to be the one to spearhead it.

Kevin Baker, of Interskate 91 South in Wilbraham, soon joined the effort. "I felt our joint efforts might inspire others to do something, too," he said. Both Interskate 91 facilities hosted identical events at the same time.

Hoefler said he had a number of specific goals in mind.

"I know many others within our industry had thought of helping, and some even held an impromptu event. But I was looking to join our fellow roller skating rink operators with a common goal, a single-minded effort, with the promotional tools needed to give the appearance of a cohesive national campaign.

"By creating a simple set of flier elements that could be incorporated by all skating centers, I hoped to achieve that appearance," he shared.

"I knew that if we had a number of facilities on board, using the same images in their promotional materials, we also suddenly had a better shot of gaining some national

exposure for roller skating," Hoefler continued. "Within our individual markets, we could forward all of the information to our media contacts...we do it all the time with National Roller Skating Month and Skate a Million Miles."

As of the RINKSIDER's press time, the idea was beginning to snowball and Hoefler said he felt it had great potential to make a difference.

"Assuming that the combined donation is a substantial sum," he added, "it wouldn't be too tough to encourage a local television crew to be on hand to report the donation and the circumstances behind it.

"It's just a feel-good situation for all involved," he said. "Skaters across the country get to help, operators can make a positive impact on the lives of many, and just maybe we would get some attention that helps roller skating shine. As skaters and operators, we know that 'roller skating rocks!' This allows us to show that roller skating cares."

Rolling 8.9 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE • TSUNAMI 03 / 11 / 11 for Relief

Please join us and help our friends across the Pacific.

Monday, April 25, 2011
Skate 5:00 - 8:00pm
Admission \$5.00

(Skate Rental \$4.50, If Needed)

**We know "Roller Skating Rocks."
 Now, let's show "Roller Skating Cares."**



**All Admissions
 Will Be Donated To
 The American Red Cross**
 Donations will be designated expressly for
 "Japan Earthquake/Tsunami Relief"



As of press time, rinks who participated in the Rolling for Relief effort included:

*Bill Hoefler
 Interskate 91 North - Hadley, Mass.*

*Kevin Baker
 Interskate 91 South - Wilbraham, Mass.*

*Rob Sherman
 Skate Zone - Crofton, Md.*

*Mike and Vickie Tharp
 Skate n Fun Zone - Manassas, Va.*

*Dave Fleming and Steve Earley
 Northridge Skateland - Northridge, Calif.*

*Chris Griffith
 Skate Station - Sumter, SC*

*Dan and Kim Brown
 Rollhaven - Flint, Mich.*

*Jeff and Erika Wymer
 Jumpin' Jupiter Skate Center - Muskegon, Mich.*

*Grayson White
 Looney's Super Skate - Montgomery, Ala.*

*Don and Susan Perkins
 Fun America at Roll On America - Lancaster, Mass.*

*Doug Warren
 Skate Center West - Murfreesboro, TN*

*Ed Hughes
 Northland Rolladium Skate Center, Liberty MO*

*Sonny Grenier
 Skating Plus, Ventura CA*

www.Interskate91.com

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