

GREENFIELD

Fundraiser looks to break down barriers to skate park use

By **MARY BYRNE**
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — In the lead-up to the new skate park's grand opening, one local business is doing its part to ensure as many kids as possible have their own skateboards to use it.

"Skateboarding ... is the most inclusive community that I've ever witnessed," said Bryan Dolan, co-owner of Ice Cream Alley, which is organizing a fundraiser to support buying skateboards for families who may not otherwise be able to afford one. "It doesn't matter if you're big or small, Black or white or in between; everyone is welcome. You're part of the group."

The aim of this fundraiser, he added, "is to make it not matter how much your parents make, either."

Although the grand opening isn't until Wednesday, June 21, to coincide with National Go Skateboarding Day, the long-awaited park, located in the northern part of the municipal parking lot behind the former Wilson's Department Store between Davis and Chapman streets, officially opened for use in late May.

"It's amazing," said Dolan, who is a skater. "I couldn't be happier."

Dolan, who was involved in the development of Unity Skate Park in Turners Falls that had a grand opening in June 2016, said he watched as the same members of the community who motivated him to be part of that project missed out on the opportunity to even use the park "just for the fact they didn't have a skateboard." He orga-

nized a similar fundraiser to purchase boards for those skaters, too.

"It's about equity and justice for kids," Dolan said. "That was the last barrier I saw — the equipment. It worked out really well in Turners. I haven't been involved in the [development of] the Greenfield park, but I wanted to make the same thing happen."

With that in mind, he launched the Greenfield Skateboard Fund, with a goal of raising \$2,000.

"We're just about there, but it seems like the need is going to be even greater than that," he noted. "We're getting so many requests for boards."

The fundraiser got started with roughly \$500 in donations from Ice Cream Alley owners, he said. The business is also collecting in-kind donations of boards and extra parts.

"We can combine those ... to fix broken skateboards kids already have," Dolan said. "I think that's really how we're going to meet our goal — rehabbing and refurbishing ... older boards."

Donations can be made online at icecreamalley.com/skate or in person at Ice Cream Alley at 22 Main St. through the second week in June. Funds will be administered by Dolan, and skateboards will be distributed by Dolan, Ben Miner, Barry Scott and Thom Bullock. With questions, email icecreamalleyskates@gmail.com.

Reporter Mary Byrne can be reached at mbyrne@recorder.com or 413-930-4429. Twitter: @MaryEByrne.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bryan Dolan, co-owner of Ice Cream Alley, and his partner, Megan, pose for a photo outside the business on Main Street in Greenfield.