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Fund-raisers tapped to pour ballpark brews

By Laurel Campbell

Post staff reporter

The recruits are in basic concession training three nights a week this month at the dark and deserted Cinergy Field, learning how to pour beer without foam and to perfectly salt a mammoth hot pretzel.

If these real-life teachers, pastors, secretaries and lawyers can just remember their training on Opening Day April 3, Reds' fans will be treated to hot brats along with home runs.

Sportservice, the company that runs concessions at Cinergy Field, this season will "hire" more than 2,000 people representing nonprofit groups to bolster its own staff in the food stands.

The groups, from churches to booster clubs, commit to working at least eight games. They are paid just over \$50 per person per game, with the promise of more in commissions.

And Sportservice gets extra workers in this tight labor market, where jobs are going unfilled.

"It also helps us get involved in the community," said Bill Schweinitz, recruiting and group training manager for Sportservice. "There are a tremendous amount of super people out there in groups trying to fund-raise. They're qualified and motivated to make money for their group."

Sportservice, like Volume Service at Firstar Center and Paramount's Kings Island, has offered the fund-raising opportunity for several years. But the

Cinergy Field concessionaire has redoubled its efforts this year, putting Schweinitz in a newly create full-time job.

"This is a companywide test," Schweinitz said. Sportservice, a unit of Buffalo-based Delaware North, operates in sports stadiums around the country.

"Last year, 35 groups earned \$1.1 million," Schweinitz said. "This year, we'll have over 160 groups participating."

Hamilton Church of God members made a mission trip to Trinidad last year with the money they earned selling nachos and coneys. Western Brown Youth Football took their players and parents to a national championship in Florida with their earnings.

All the volunteer workers agree on two things: The money is great. The work is hard. "It's hard work, and it's stressful," said Missy Jones, an administrative secretary at the Clermont County Health Department. "You're totally responsible for the success or failure of your stand."

Mrs. Jones and other Brown County youth football parents worked 42 events at Cinergy Field last year. They made \$45,000.

Schweinitz said most groups average between \$75 and \$125 per person per event. But those are last year's (pre-Ken Griffey Jr.) figures, Schweinitz said.

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