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Local

Porta La Gente hosts basketball tournament

By MARCI

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RACINE - Two days of basketball games, food and Hispanic community spirit are planned for Saturday and Sunday when Porta La Gente hosts its annual basketball tournament.

Robert Ortiz, who has played in the tournaments for 10 years, said the event is a good way to help the Hispanic community.

"It's a lot of good basketball and a lot of good food. It's a fun tournament to play in," said Ortiz, whose team won the championship last year. "A lot of the young men are getting together and trying to do something positive," he said.

Porta La Gente, which in English means "for the people," will be donating all of its proceeds from the event toward the college scholarships of three Hispanic students.

Juan Martinez, who co-organizes the tournament with Alex Cruz and Mario Guzman, said although the tournament is free to the public, funds are raised for the scholarships by charging an entry fee to the basketball teams. This year 12 teams each must pay \$70.

The organization also has a cookout and sells concessions at the games, which benefits the scholarship fund.

Following the tournament, toward the end of the school year, Porta La Gente holds an annual banquet in which the students receive their scholarships. Roy Morales, president of the Hispanic organization, said three high school seniors have been chosen this year.

Natassia Garcia of Case High School and Paul Billips of Walden III will receive \$500 scholarships for their academic achievements. Carissa Barrera, a Park High School student, will receive a \$500 scholarship for athletics as a volleyball and basketball player.

The students were chosen based on their Hispanic heritage, their achievements and their need for the

scholarship. Morales said Porta La Gente attempts to give the scholarships to first-generation college students.

"We figure if we can get one to go to college, the rest will follow," he said.

Porta La Gente has been holding basketball and softball tournaments annually for 10 years to provide scholarships for Hispanic youth.

"We started out giving one \$100 scholarship, now we are giving out three \$500 scholarships," Morales said. "We are trying to make better relations in the Hispanic community, trying to get a little pride amongst our people and trying to get them involved in doing things."

The 12-team tournament will be held at Douglas Park, 2221 Douglas Ave. The first game will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday, and the last game that day will be held at 4 p.m. The tournament will resume at 10 a.m. Sunday, and the championship game will be held at 3 p.m. For more information on the basketball tournament, call Morales at 639-6414.

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