


# The Athens Messenger

## Athens Bobcats hockey team receives \$3K grant

By TYLER BUCHANAN Messenger staff journalist Jan 4, 2015  0

The Athens Youth Hockey Association believes a “kid on ice is a kid out of hot water.”

Opportunities for youth players in the Athens Bobcats team will continue thanks to a \$3,000 grant on behalf of the McConnell Education Foundation. The donation was part of an annual and ongoing effort by the Foundation and the Columbus Blue Jackets to support Ohio high school hockey programs.

The Athens Bobcats team is part of the Greater Columbus High School Club Hockey League and competes against players from throughout the state.

Blue Jackets player Mike Letestu helped present the donation to AYHA Co-Captains Ethan Gates and Nathan Rickey as well as player Thomas Smith. The captains were also honored at the Blue Jackets’ Dec. 23 home game and got to take the ice during the National Anthem.

The grant comes as the Athens Bobcats provided their own donation to a veteran’s family for the holidays. The team donates money and food items to a family each season and continues to collect items at home games at Bird Arena the rest of the season.

AYHA President Dan Gates said the \$3,000 grant shows the Association “is a well-respected group of volunteers that provide positive team and character building opportunities for youth in the southern Ohio region who enjoy playing hockey.”

“That our varsity team contributed money and collected food for a Vet family represents the best we could ask of our youth: to give back to their community and be positive role models and that when they leave our Association they will be reliable, thoughtful and responsible citizens,” Gates said.

The Athens Bobcats have two home games next weekend and five more in January and February to close out the season. For the Bobcats’ schedule, visit [www.gchschl.com](http://www.gchschl.com).



*Columbus Blue Jackets player, Mike Letestu, second from the left, poses with Athens Youth Hockey Association Varsity co-captains Ethan Gates and Nathan Rickey, and player Thomas Smith, after presenting a \$3,000 grant to the association.*