JIM PHILLIPS

Jim Phillips, who was born and raised in Castro Valley, always knew that his community offered excellent youth sports opportunities – baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, flag football, etc. – but when his children became a certain age he realized there was one major missing piece.

Outside of school, there was no opportunity to compete in track and field or cross country. The nearest track clubs were in Oakland and Fremont. So, Phillips, in 2001, started the Castro Valley Track Club with his own kids – 12-year-old Katelyn and 10-year-old Jackson -- the first two members.

Phillips, a former track athlete himself at Castro Valley High, made it clear from the start that the club was not competing with school programs. Quite the opposite. It was there to give athletes from ages 6 to 18 an opportunity to train and compete in USA Track and Field sanctioned meets when the school season was finished.

“The secret to our success was surrounding myself with great coaches, including some college All-Americans,” Phillips said. He particularly paid tribute to Dennis Coulter and Helen Brusco, who have served as volunteer coaches since the club’s inception.

The initial focus of the track club was on running, but field events were added the second year and soon after that the club added decathlon, javelin, hammer throw and steeplechase, all events not offered in high school.

An innovation that has worked especially well for the CVTC is the high school mentor program. Phillips encourages the club’s high school athletes to serve as role models for the younger members. It’s a win-win: the young athletes get personal attention and the mentors get coaching experience.

“We’ve had 120 mentor coaches,” Phillips noted.

Phillips emphasizes “self improvement” as the measure of every athlete’s success. “Kids mature at different rates,” he explained. “That’s why we stress personal improvement. I don’t measure success by winning or beating other athletes.”

Phillips not only formed the Castro Valley Track Club, he has been its only president. In addition to coaching, he does all the administrative work.

Jim and his wife, Melissa, have called Castro Valley their home for the entire 36 years of their marriage.