

Bright Ideas from the Southern Region

Cynthia Heights Elementary - Evansville – The *High Five Program* rewards those who participate in making healthy choices. There is a monthly accountability form that is verified with the student and parent signatures. There are five areas students may choose to complete. These include: 1) Eat one fruit or vegetable every day. 2) Do five minutes of exercise. 3) Get at least 8 hours of sleep on school nights. 4) Keep your body, hair, teeth, hands and clothes clean. 5) Use your brain...read a book, play a game with family or a friend, be a helper at home or school, remember to use your manners, and be kind to others every day. Every student that returns their form at the end of the month is rewarded with a token gift that in some way promotes a healthy lifestyle. If the student completes all five healthy choices for the month, their name goes into a special drawing for a new bicycle and safety helmet. These are awarded to one boy and one girl at a year end assembly.

Hebron Elementary - Evansville – An outreach to working parents. We decided to offer something to engage both parents and children so that the entire family could attend the event. A pediatrician with many patients in our school was invited to speak on successful parenting. A science show was scheduled for the children during the forum on parenting. A catered meal was offered at cost so that it would be more convenient for families to get to an evening meeting. A presentation by a local bank was given on job opportunities for mothers who desire to work during school hours only.

Highland Elementary - Evansville – With the school counselor we developed an in-house tutorial program for students, titled PASS (Parents Assisting Student's Success). Parents commit to work one on one with a student on a weekly basis. The areas included reading skills, math facts, and spelling words. At the end of the school year each student and his/her tutor attend a buffet breakfast to celebrate their accomplishments.

Howard Roosa Elementary - Evansville – We co-sponsor, with the student council, a Thanksgiving Food Drive. Canned and non-perishable items were collected. Student council members collected and counted the items from each classroom. PTA members sorted the items to be distributed. A local fruit market donated the baskets. The PTA supplied a turkey for each basket. We were able to supply 23 needy families with a basket to help them have a wonderful Thanksgiving. The homeroom that collected the most items was given a pizza party.

McGary Middle - Evansville – Our involvement with a local nursing home has been good for our students. The residents are invited to all PTSA dinners and activities as well as the school play and music programs. A PTSA representative posts notices of our activities at the nursing home in their community center and also leaves a sign up sheet for anyone interested in attending the activity. We then have a car pool that picks them up at the community center and returns them after the program. Many of the residents have become members of our PTA.

Mt. Tabor Elementary - New Albany – A new idea for a fundraiser! Parents were asked to "Walk a Mile for Your Child." This was the theme in asking parents to sponsor their children to walk a mile around the school grounds during their physical education class. All proceeds went directly to our school and our children. We met our fundraising goal and celebrated our effort with a cook out at the school. This gave the families a chance to get acquainted and get involved.

There was food and entertainment in a picnic-type atmosphere. A select group of students approached the microphone and challenged the parents to walk that same mile as they did. It was somewhat emotional to see all those families join hands and walk that mile again.

Stockwell Elementary - Evansville – New Parent Reception During the first few weeks of school, invitations were sent to kindergarten parents and parents of students new to the school. The purpose was to give detailed information about the PTA programs. PTA board members were introduced along with the principal, vice principal, and counselor. The new parents received “parent packets” that contained a PTA calendar of events, an executive board member list, a letter from the PTA president, and a bumper sticker and sport bottle both with the school logo on them.

Tekoppel Elementary - Evansville – We offered Family Activity Nights throughout the school year. Activity nights were divided by grade levels. In October, for kindergarten and first grade families, Halloween safety was stressed. We had our Officer Friendly talk to everyone about trick-or-treat safety, such as, safe costumes, costume reflectors, and trick-or-treating with others. Families participated in different activities set up in the gym. These activities included making your own buttons, friendship bracelets, bookmarks, Halloween safety coloring pages, making sucker ghosts, storytelling and a mummy wrap race. Parents used toilet paper to wrap their child as a mummy, then the children had to race down the mats to win. Each mummy received a surprise for their attempt at running. In January, for second and third grade families, disabilities awareness was stressed. A presentation was given by “helper” dogs from a local obedience club and also included an obedience demonstration, training exercise and grooming. Activities were similar to the first activity night but three-legged races were held this time. The third activity night is still being planned.

Thompkins Middle - Evansville – The *Reality Store* is a “life simulating” game. The program was designed to allow students to see what it was like to make it through a month on a one income salary while providing food, clothing, and daycare for 1-3 children. All students were single parents to teach them that in *Reality* you may be forced into a situation where you are no longer married, due to divorce, death or some other reason and need to provide for your children on a single income. The occupation/salary is chosen for the student, and so was the number of children they would have. Some students may make \$900. a month while others could be making \$5000. a month. Students then go from booth to booth trying to purchase all the necessities they would need for the month. Uncle Sam was there to take his cut first. Students then took the amount left after taxes and went to purchase a car, get housing, pay utilities, daycare, insurance, clothes and decide what else they can afford.

West Terrace Elementary - Evansville – To assist families in our school having a difficult time making ends meet at Christmas, students and their families were asked to sponsor a West Terrace family in need. The needy families were assigned a Roman numeral and each family member a letter. The family volunteers became known as “angels.” Angels were given the information needed to purchase the necessary gift in the correct size or that special toy request. They returned their wrapped packages with their specially coded tags on the exterior. The packages were then grouped by families and then a new personalized tag was put on for that particular family member. The gifts were either picked up by the family or delivered to their home by the principal, counselor or nurse. The response was so great that we were able to assist three of our neighboring schools with their efforts.