

**Parent Engagement Opportunity Fund
Spring, 2009**

Parkdale Home and School Association

President: Jessie Frost-Wicks

Principal: Michele LeClair

Name of Project: Family Fun Night

Goal(s):

- To bring parents, teachers, and children together for an evening of fun and social interaction.
- To develop a familiarity between parents, teachers, students and future teachers and to introduce future students.

Description:

The Parkdale Home and School Association Family Fun Night included many activities, including:

- Parent/teacher/student sporting activity (soccer-basketball)
- Barbeque and "sharing table" for a pot-luck meal
- Games and activities stations (face painting, balloons, animals)
- School choir performance
- Dunk tank
- Jumping Gymbaree (inflatable)

Did you achieve your goal?

Yes, we think we did! It served to promote a more welcoming and familiar environment for parents and nurtured the relationships between teachers, students and parents.

Who did the project benefit?

Parents: Established familiarity with the school and staff

Teachers: Built on established relationships and were introduced to new parents (as invitees included parents of incoming grade one students)

Students: Got to interact with teachers in a social setting and just have fun

What challenges are you still facing with parent engagement?

While there will always be some parents who will remain disengaged, this past year, with the potential closure of our school, has proven to be a "bonding" experience for parents, with each other as well as with teachers.

Thoughts about the project topic (provided by project partners)

Having fun is a wonderful way to learn. Schools are often viewed as places where the "serious" learning takes place. The fact is that the "fun" learning is the way most of us learn. We learn best when we enjoy the activity that is used for learning. We sometimes make the mistake of thinking that learning is best done through a book when in fact the best learning happens through doing activities that allow us to feel involved and enjoy what is taking place.

Family fun nights demonstrate to parents, children and the school staff the importance of bringing fun into the learning process. Taking the time to prepare activities that lessen the perception that learning is "all work and no play" goes a long way to increase the learning that takes place.