

**Parent Engagement Opportunity Fund
July, 2009**

St. Teresa's Home and School Association

President: Marcella Byrne

Principal: Noreen Lisi

Name of Project: Family Fun Day

Goal(s):

- To provide an opportunity for parents and children in the community to participate in activities together.
- To give new families a chance to meet other parents and have their children meet other children in the community.
- To encourage more parent volunteers in the school.

Description:

Our fun day was held on a warm day in July. We partnered with the St. Teresa's Development Corporation and had many events including a bike obstacle course, pony rides, petting zoo, scavenger hunt, fish pond, and a visit from the East River Fire Truck.

Activities were run by parents in the community with stations inside the school gymnasium for such activities as face-painting, craft projects and a canteen.

Did you achieve your goal?

Yes, we did! We were able to bring the children and parents of St. Teresa's and surrounding areas together for a fun-filled day with activities that enabled all age groups to work together and interact with each other.

Who did the project benefit?

Both parents and children alike benefitted from this event by having activities, such as the scavenger hunt, where team work was involved.

What challenges are you still facing with parent engagement?

Getting parents involved on a continual basis is still a challenge. However, with the transition into the new schools and events working towards a successful transition, hopefully more parents will step up and see the benefits of their own involvement in their child's schooling.

Thoughts about the project topic (provided by project partners):

The permanent closing of a school is a traumatic event for a community, particularly a rural community where the school is often considered the center of activities. The St. Teresa's community came together in July, 2009, to celebrate the school's long history and all that it has meant to the community.

Parents worked hard to keep their school open, as they should. When a decision was reached by the School Board to close the school, the community determined that along with the grieving that accompanied the closing they would celebrate the wonderful things that happened over the years that related to the school.

The approach that the present parents, school staff and the community took to address this difficult time was a wonderful learning opportunity for children who witnessed how to manage difficult situations working together as a community. Congratulations to all involved!