

**Parent Engagement Opportunity Fund
October, 2009**

Stonepark Intermediate Home and School Association

President: Michelle Cottreau and Debra Lynn Trainor

Principal: Norman Beck

Name of Project: Grade Seven New Math Seminar and Wellness Event

Goal(s):

- To educate parents about the new grade seven math program
- To increase confidence in providing math support at home
- To encourage more parent involvement in their child's learning and in our school
- To motivate students to be active and lead a healthy lifestyle

Description:

In October, the grade seven math teachers partnered with the Home and School to plan a math learning event for parents and students. Using an interactive approach, information was provided to the parents on the new math program. During this time, Gordon McNeilly (UFit) spoke with the students and led them through many fun-filled fitness activities to educate them about how to enhance their life and live a healthy lifestyle.

Excerpt written by Stonepark Intermediate principal, Norman Beck, for the November school newsletter:

“On Monday, October 26th, the Stonepark Home & School Association, in collaboration with Mr. Stratton, Mr. McCourt, and Ms. Somers, put on an outstanding evening of fun, learning and physical fitness for our Grade 7 parents and students. This was an opportunity for parents to learn first hand what is going on in the Grade Seven math program so they can, in turn, provide support for their child at home. At the same time, a fitness instructor put the students through their paces in the gym. Following both sessions, all groups came together for a nutritious snack in the cafeteria.”

The evening was a tremendous success, and we owe a big thank you to the Home and School members and teachers who organized the evening and to the parents for their enthusiastic response to the session. It was a wonderful example of the parents and school communities working collaboratively for the betterment of their children. We couldn't have done it without all these people. Keep your eyes and ears peeled for possible future sessions in the new year!

Did you achieve your goal?

Yes, parents were very pleased to learn skills that will help their child; and students enjoyed the fitness class--physical activity is always a good motivator!

Who did the project benefit?

This project benefitted the many parents who attended the math workshop so all of their children and their children's math teachers will reap the benefit of this increased education and learning. As well, the students who attended the fitness event all enjoyed it very much!

What challenges are you still facing with parent engagement?

Some challenges:

1. Parents are busy.
2. Parents and children sometimes butt heads when it comes to homework and some parents lack the necessary math skills to help.
3. Finding activities and programs that will compel parents to make the time to participate.

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

Bringing parents together to engage in several activities can be a challenge.

This is particularly true if the activities are not closely related as was the case with Stonepark's math awareness for parents plus a wellness event. When this approach is well-planned, as was the case with Stonepark, these "multi-tasked" approaches provide an opportunity to engage a broader audience.

As well, it promotes the reality that school learning is an integrated process where students participate, on a daily basis, in a variety of different learning processes.