

Parent Engagement Opportunity Fund
November, 2009

Glen Stewart Home and School

President: Sue MacLennan

Principal: Pat Campbell

Name of project:

Reading Comprehension Week

Goal:

- To improve children's comprehension skills.
- To provide parents with a number of strategies they could use to help their children better understand what they read.
- To have students, parents and staff participate in a fun-filled, week-long exploration into the world of literature.

Description

The entire school and its families participated in a week-long event focusing on reading comprehension in which parents and children read together and practiced reading strategies together. On Monday evening, Robyn Mcauley, language arts specialist with the Department of Education, provided tips for parents about the reading process and effective reading comprehension strategies. Also on Monday, take-home packages were sent to parents and children that included reading comprehension hints, websites, resources, and "reading comprehension tips" bookmarks. Each morning, students made announcements about that day's activities and each evening parents and children were encouraged to read together and talk about the strategies they used. Ballots were filled out by the families and a child from each grade had an opportunity to win a prize. Daily prize draws for new storybooks kept children and parents motivated to continue reading together. To finish off the week, students and staff of Glen Stewart School wore costumes to school of their favorite literary character. Their costumes entitled them to a costume ballot for a \$25 gift certificate from Indigo. As a reward to celebrate the success of their week, students and staff celebrated with an ice cream treat!

Did you achieve your goal?

Yes, we think we did. Our Comprehension Week was more successful than we had ever imagined. More than 50 parents attended the workshop and interest was high throughout the week. The storybook character costume parade on Friday was a huge success and many families were involved in helping their child ready their costume. Having the principal and staff dress as their favourite storybook character surely added to the fun! We have an online survey feedback form that we have asked parents to fill out to provide us with information about this event and with other ways we can help to keep the parents and staff of Glen Stewart working together for our children.

Who did the project benefit?

The entire school community benefited from this project. Parents learned current information about reading and reading strategies and were given opportunities to have "guided practice" in using these strategies each evening with their child. Teachers benefited from being involved in designing "at home" activities for the Parents and children that were worthwhile reading activities but of a type that were fun-filled as well.

What challenges are you still facing with parent engagement?

A major challenge is to have parents understand that they are an integral - one half! - part of the "Home and School" concept and that they "belong" to our H&S as soon as and as long as they have a child at Glen Stewart School. Our challenge is to provide opportunities for parents to respond, support and participate even if they cannot always attend a monthly H&S meeting.