

**Parent Engagement Opportunity Fund
Spring, 2009**

Spring Park Home and School Association

President: Tracey Willoughby

Principal: Serge Leduc

Name of Project: Literacy Awareness Author Night

Goal(s):

- To bring parents into the school
- To increase literacy skills

Description:

We had a very successful event during which we invited parents to come to the school to participate in an evening during which we celebrated literacy within our school.

Did you achieve your goal?

Yes, we think we did. We brought in an author to read to the kids and parents and discussed writing. We had Oceans Wild set up in the gym to speak about ocean life and conservation. We also had a BBQ and the parents cooked and served the students. We partnered with Indigo and received a donation of books and a gift card.

Who did the project benefit?

Our project benefitted all. We received all positive responses. Comments from kids included: "This was the best day of my life!" and "Best day ever!"

What challenges are you still facing with parent engagement?

Getting new faces out instead of the same loyal crew every time!

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

The term "literacy" has come to be associated with a variety of other areas besides reading. For example, computer literacy, health literacy, and math literacy, as well as literacy associated with

reading, are now all part of the language of education.

Literacy associated with reading is complex. In the elementary years, schools use progress in reading as the major gauge of a child's academic success. In the early grades, the focus is on learning to read and write. Learning that words have parts and that these parts have sounds that, when put together, form words is a complex undertaking. For this reason, stories are the main tool that teachers use to teach reading because of the meaning that stories give words and sentences.

The learning to read period is quickly followed by a focus on reading to gather and understand information. At a time such as this, when children have limitless access to information in different forms, developing the skills to comprehend information text is essential.

When you think of what is learned in the years between five and twelve, both in school and outside school, you can understand why teachers are always asking parents to become involved in their children's learning. Parents who understand the complexity of literacy and the place it has in their child's life and who actively partner with their child's school are giving a gift that lasts a lifetime.