

**Parent Engagement Opportunity Fund
Fall and Winter, 2009**

M.E. Callaghan Home and School Association

President: Kathy DesRoches and Hal Perry

Principal: Jackie Arsenault

Name of Project: Parent Engagement Drama Program

Goal(s):

- To bring more parents into the school in volunteer roles
- To enhance the students' learning and social environment
- To offer a drama program with parent volunteers

Description:

We prepared a drama program using parent volunteers. First, the Home and School Association purchased two ping-pong tables and associated equipment for the interaction between students and parents. Volunteers from the drama program purchased a play, made copies of it, and worked on set and clothing. Preparation for the program began in September. The presentation of the drama program for the school and community took place in December, 2009.

Did you achieve your goal?

We delivered the program with a small number of parents attending but all students saw it.

The Drama Club began with a performance at Christmas. The games and the ping-pong tables were a huge success. Unfortunately, we haven't as yet had many parents engage.

Who did the project benefit?

Parents, teachers and students.

What challenges are you still facing with parent engagement?

The same parents are the ones who continue to be involved.

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

Anyone who has participated in a school activity that takes place after school hours remembers the experience. Teachers go well beyond teaching hours to connect with children and influence them in ways that last a lifetime.

The arts is a powerful vehicle to use to engage children socially, emotionally and academically. Drama is literature. Participating in putting on a dramatic performance is far more than only reading a play, it is living a play. Even a student who has only one line is part of a bigger event and that one line or that action is a vital part of the story that is being told.

Home and School's encouragement of children's learning through the arts, be it through purchases of materials, assisting directly with a play, attending the event, etc., sends out the message that parents recognize that school is far more than learning content, it is also learning about life. It has been said that life is a play and we are all players in it. Having the opportunity to be a member of a cast of players is looking at life in a unique way. When parents participate and share this event with their child, the whole experience is enhanced.