

# Math Day

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*Cresaptown Elementary School  
Cresaptown, Maryland*

Olympic-style games, microscopes, and babies made of sand were among the activities bringing students and parents together at Cresaptown Elementary Math Day, last spring.

The event, held the last hour of a school day, had two goals: increase family involvement in their children's schoolwork and improve the children's understanding of "all things math." State tests indicate that Cresaptown students need to improve their math skills. Members of the school's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) decided to give teachers a hand by sponsoring a math day that would help students learn math facts and show parents how math is taught and reinforced in school and how they might continue to assist student learning at home.

Parents or guardians of about one-third of Cresaptown's students—115 adults in all—came to school for the 2 p.m. event. The adults worked with more than one student, so that all the youngsters had a grown-up buddy.

Each classroom had at least one math activity for the students and parents to work on together—some classes had more than one. One class did Math Olympics, throwing paper and other objects and measuring the distance to the spot where they fell. The upper grades used microscopes to measure and analyze the contents of slides. The microscopes were attached to a computer to allow for more advanced calculations. Several classes played math games; some teachers taught lessons using manipulatives, and others used the computer lab to introduce parents to web sites that would help children practice and reinforce their math skills.

By far the most popular event of the day was the "sand baby" activity where each student used sand and zip-top bags to make a baby that was the same weight as they were when they were born. Parents were responsible for providing their children's birth weights and were

also asked to bring in baby clothes. Students then dressed the sand bag in baby onesies, and attached paper arms and legs and a face to make it more life-like. At the end of the event, students took their sand infants home.

The event cost the school only \$20 to produce and promote. The money was needed to buy sand. Administrators used incidental funds to cover the cost.

Action team members publicized the event through fliers in the students' homework folders and an article in the school's newsletter. The school administration made morning announcements about Math Day. Next year, Cresaptown plans to conduct another math day. Organizers already know they need to notify families earlier so that more family members can arrange their schedules to be able to attend.

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