

# Keys to Successful School, Family, and Community Partnerships

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*Leonardtown Middle School  
Leonardtown, Maryland*

Informational fliers turned one volunteer group into a small educational publishing house last year as part of Leonardtown Middle School's Keys to Successful Partnerships program.

Members of the school's Action Team for Partnership (ATP) decided to increase communication by publishing pamphlets about NNPS's Six Types of Involvement and by distributing them to area parents. Using the NNPS model, they wanted to draft practical tips to help parents connect with their children and their schools. At first, the ATP thought that informational flyers would be helpful, but after careful consideration they realized it wouldn't take much more work to produce a full set of pamphlets.

ATP and PTA members set to work to organize parent volunteers to produce the brochures. They solicited parents' opinions on brochure contents focused on NNPS's Six Types of Involvement. This year they published brochures for three of the six types—Parenting, Communicating, and Learning at Home.

Once the ATP settled on these topics, school administrators worked on selecting and formatting the information to fit on a two-sided brochure. Final drafts of the text were then returned to the production team that produced the pamphlets in the school's volunteer-manned copy shop.

The first brochure on Type 1-Parenting gave caregivers tips for helping their children deal with teasing and bullying. The second brochure on Type 2-Communicating provided information about the school's web site and online report card system. The third brochure on Type 4-Learning at Home detailed techniques to help children study and complete more homework.

Volunteers distributed brochures to parents at several major school events, such as honor society ceremonies and school dances. They

also made the brochures available on the school's web site.

By the end of the semester hundreds of children and parents benefited from the information in the brochures. Teachers reported decreased anxiety about parent involvement and noticed an increase in students' self esteem. "I was extremely proud of the work our two volunteers did," the ATP Chair said.

The brochures cost about \$200 to publish. The school used money from its own budget to cover the expense of the paper and toner.

Next year, the ATP will publish more brochures on the remaining three types of involvement: Type 3-Volunteering, Type 5-Decision Making, and Type 6-Collaborating with the Community. They will also focus on improving the distribution processes to ensure that more parents receive copies of the pamphlets.

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