
MAKOWSKI MARKETPLACE

Stanley M. Makowski E.C.C.

Buffalo, New York

This year a committee of parents and staff transformed the Imagination Center at Stanley M. Makowski E.C.C. into an international marketplace for two days. This partnership practice with its international flair targeted four goals: (1) to increase parent involvement; (2) to increase literacy skills; (3) to celebrate each child's success; and (4) to create a memorable, developmentally appropriate learning experience for the school community. The event coincided with the school district's Celebrate Success Week.

The committee chose children's books whose themes and characters represented the school's diverse ethnic population. Children created artwork in their classrooms and art classes to represent their ethnic heritage and to correlate with the book themes. The artwork decorated the Marketplace.

The committee developed activities to link to the book themes. Parents and staff worked at stations in the Marketplace with the books and interactive activities. Volunteers read the books to students in small groups, and then helped them with thematically related art or cooking projects, games, or writing activities. A storyteller performed for the youngest children. Each class scheduled a time to attend.

The art teacher wrote a grant to purchase art supplies to create batiks and other ethnic art forms at the event. Money from the school Book Fair and resources in the library supplied the books. A Family Literacy Grant from a community agency enabled us to hire the storyteller. In order to make the event self-supporting, SOME of the booths charged a nominal fee (10-25 cents). This enabled all children to participate and generated enough start-up funds for the future.

During the two days, 1150 children visited Makowski Marketplace. Over 50 parents volunteered to help each day, and 300 parents attended with their children. Next year, the committee will follow the same planning process, but change the activities and expand the theme. A new room parent program will provide over 50 parents to contact for help, in addition to the parents who sign up to help during orientation.

It is always a wonderful feeling to sponsor an event with developmentally appropriate themes and activities that ALL children and their families can enjoy.

Norma Fletcher, Coordinator

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