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## **MINI RELAY/FIELD DAY TO FIGHT CANCER**

### **Centennial Elementary School**

#### **Wapakoneta, Ohio**

Students and staff raised funds and awareness for the Auglaize County Cancer Society walking together in the Mini-Relay/Field Day held in May during school hours. This collaboration educated students about the effects of cancer and prevention methods; built stronger connections between students, parents, the school staff, and members of the community; and promoted a good cause. The Centennial Elementary staff had participated previously in the Auglaize County American Cancer Society's Relay for Life as a team. This year the team wanted to include Centennial students, so they initiated the Mini-Relay/Field Day to Fight Cancer.

A group of staff members met in January to plan the Mini-Relay/Field Day activity to include all students (K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>) and staff members at Centennial Elementary. In April, an opening ceremony motivated all students and staff members. The school guidance counselor spoke to the audience about cancer and its effects, and representatives from the Relay for Life committee shared their thoughts with the students and staff members. Two weeks before the Mini-Relay/Field Day activity took place, all students and staff members obtained an envelope to collect donations for the American Cancer Society. A donations thermometer in the school's main hallway grew to reach the goal of \$2,500.

On the day of the Mini-Relay/Field Day, all students and staff members and many parents walked thirty minutes around a ¼ mile course set up behind the school. For each lap, each walker collected a clothespin; at the end of the 30 minutes, each class counted their clothespins to record the total number of laps walked. Five hundred seventy walkers walked 3,486 laps. Second grade pen pals joined the Mini Relay/Field Day from Coldwater Elementary School. With the help of all those listed above and community sponsors, organizations, businesses, and the Centennial Parent Teacher organization, Centennial Elementary raised \$7,901.84 for the Auglaize County Unit of the American Cancer Society. Special guests State Representative Derrick Seaver and Co-Chairs of the Relay for Life Committee Laura Kelley and Theresa Fisher participated in the closing ceremony. To celebrate achieving their goal, students and staff members taped the principal to the wall.

At the official Auglaize County Relay for Life (a 21-hour walk for cancer), held on May 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, all students were invited to walk the first lap together as a school team of students, their families, and staff members from Centennial Elementary.

A challenge for the Mini-Relay/Field Day was the uncertainty of the weather. To overcome this challenge, an indoor course was established as a back up plan. Fortunately, it turned out to be a nice day. The minimal costs of this activity were supported by the Learn and Serve Ohio grant program.

Afterwards, every student and staff member received a letter showing the measured results of the activity. Relay participants wrote thank-you notes to community organizations that sponsored them, the local newspaper featured the story as well. An evaluation sheet, sent home with every student and staff member, enabled everyone to share their thoughts and comments about this community activity.

The students benefited from this activity by learning about cancer and the American Cancer Society. They gained a sense of community awareness and a sense of pride knowing they helped find a cure for cancer. This activity was a great way to collaborate with and for the community.

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