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## **MAD HATTER MEASUREMENT**

### **Frederick Law Olmstead #64, #67, and #56**

#### **Buffalo, New York**

Mad Hatter Measurement supported the school improvement goal to increase student math achievement by giving parents and children a fun opportunity to work with rulers and measurement. Parents and children enhanced math skills while creating hats and scarves.

Mad Hatter Measurement resulted from a project that made hats and scarves to give to shelters during the holiday season. The children had such fun making the hats and scarves that they wished they could keep them. The Program Committee of Olmstead Home School Association decided to have a free evening event where parents and children could work together. Measurement was added to the sewing activity to reach one of the action plan goals. The Program Committee asked teachers for math measurement activities and purchased felt (on sale at 50% off), needles, straight pins, and thread. The school provided rulers and pencils. All families received a flyer about the event that requested an R.S.V.P. to make sure there were enough materials. Measurement booklets were made up, along with copies of the scarf and hat pattern. Prior to the event, some parents took the felt home to cut in advance.

Prior to guests arriving, the program committee set up tables with rulers, pencils, needles, straight pins, and a pattern. Sets of hats and scarves lined the edge of the stage so that children could pick the material they wanted. Facilitators gave general directions at the beginning of the event, and volunteer teachers and parents walked around offering further directions and helping check initial measurements. Children measured the length of their scarves as well as the length of the fringe they needed to cut. They also measured an edge on their hats that needed to be turned up and sewed.

At the event, families also received packets of measurement activities for grades pre-k to eight to work on together at home. The packets showed the many simple ways measurement is used in daily life.

Approximately 175-200 parents and students attended Mad Hatter Measurement at a cost of about \$300. About twenty eighth graders and some of their parents came to sew hats and scarves to give away as part of a service project. Staff members served refreshments provided by the Program Committee and donated by the community. The Program Committee also paid

for door prizes that were awarded to the parents. A huge response very close to the day of program required purchasing more felt. Although it was no longer on sale, the fabric store gave the rest of the needed felt for 50% off.

Students benefited from this practice because they used measurement activities in a fun way, and got to make something useful to take home. The event fostered a feeling of community and friendliness. People attended who normally do not attend school functions. Parents got the chance to do something fun with their children. Mad Hatter Measurement was held on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, so the Program Committee passed out some blue paper clouds and markers and asked parents to write a dream they have for their children. The clouds were hung in the school for all to see.

Parents and students gave all positive comments. When 8:00 p.m. rolled around, nobody made a move to leave! The most positive evaluation was the many students who wore their hats and scarves to school the next day. They were all proud of their handiwork!

*Kathy Rua, Action Team Member*

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