
ARMINTA COFFEE HOUSE

Arminta Elementary School

North Hollywood, California

Arminta Elementary School's focus this year was to increase students' writing achievement. The Action Team for Partnerships planned an event to showcase student writing, promote family literacy, and increase parent support of students' learning.

During a School Site Parent Council meeting, Action Team members decided to convert the Parent Center into a coffee house and host an authors' night where students of all ages could share their creative writing. Teachers were asked to submit student work ahead of time so that a program could be created. Students rehearsed the day before the event and were given instructions about when to arrive.

Parents announced the event in the parent newsletter and recruited parent volunteers for the evening. Throughout the Parent Center, they set up round tables with brightly colored tablecloths and Arminta Coffee House placemats. Each table had a battery-operated light to create ambience. One parent volunteer welcomed visitors and handed out programs. Parents also served coffee, tea, and cookies and played jazz music on a CD player in between student readings.

Due to scheduling challenges, two authors' nights were held for one hour each. In total, about 400 students and family members attended. Funds for parent workshops

paid for the refreshments.

Both parents and students really enjoyed the Arminta Coffee House. Parents were excited and proud when the students read their work. Students had the opportunity to share their best work, and a wide range of students participated. Teachers and district staff were impressed by the quantity and quality of participation.

Next year, a bigger venue is needed because parents lined up outside, waiting to get in. The Action Team will also make sure that a translation unit is available, as students read their work in English. The Arminta Coffee House was a festive way to celebrate students' writing with families.

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