

FUNDRAISING FOR FAMILIES

Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (PSD) is a center day school for 185 deaf children in grades preschool through high school. The Action Team for Partnership at PSD devised an innovative fundraiser to help families with their specific needs to support students' education.

When a child joins PSD, the family receives a beginning sign language book to encourage families to become more fluent in American Sign Language (ASL). Children quickly outgrow this book, and their parents need to expand their sign vocabulary to keep ahead of their children. Unfortunately, ASL books, CD ROMs, and video programs can be expensive. Fundraising for Families helped provide these materials for families.

For the past two years, the Action Team, comprised of students, teachers, family members, and community representatives, has organized the fundraiser. Action Team members determined the type of fundraiser and publicized the activity through the parent newsletter and fliers that were sent home. All of the funds raised help families buy sign language or parenting materials for their homes—none of the funds are for the Action Team.

This year, the fundraiser was a Krispie Kreme Donut Sale. For each \$5 box of donuts that parents sold, they earned \$2.50 worth of credit toward sign language or parenting materials. In the past, families had a

choice between two sign language dictionaries. This year, a sign language CD ROM, a sign language instructional video, sign language materials in Spanish, and a parenting resource book on managing communication and behavior in the home were added to the choices. A few families raised so much money that they were able to earn all of the ASL materials. All families (even those who sold only one box of donuts) were able to earn something because the profit from the sale of donuts the staff purchased helped subsidize the materials needed for the 21 families who participated.

Fundraising for Families has been a wonderful way to provide materials to interested families who have the motivation to use educational materials at home but not the money to purchase them. It was useful to families with children in all grades and cost the school nothing except the time to organize the event. Based on the increasing number of families participating, PSD expects to continue Fundraising for Families as a yearly event. The Action Team will ask for parent feedback on the popularity of the item sold and vary the items that the parents can earn so that the fundraiser continues to be innovative and useful from year to year.

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