

“She & Me” Girls Night In

*Roosevelt Elementary
Saint Paul, Minnesota*

“Achieving starts with believing.” That motto led Roosevelt Elementary to organize a girls night in for its diverse population of third-grade girls and their mothers or other significant women. The “She and Me” program invited these females to dinner, bracelet making, and career exploration. The all-female career night encouraged third-grade girls to continue their hard work in school to reach their goals and dreams for the future.

The girls and their mothers, grandmothers, or other significant women listened to presentations by successful professional women from the community. A pediatrician, a Spanish teacher, a fire captain and equipment driver, a social worker, a nurse practitioner, a financial analyst, and a YMCA director each discussed their professions and the paths they took to reach their current positions. The presentations were inspiring.

The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) strove to organize an event that embraced its culturally and linguistically diverse population. The 90 participants began the evening with a Mexican dinner and other ethnic foods. Parents and staff helped recruit diverse speakers including Vietnamese and African-American professionals who would be role models for the girls. Title I funds helped pay for interpreters.

In addition to the career discussions, mothers and daughters relaxed while making beaded bracelets for each other. A school social worker volunteered to provide childcare for younger siblings so that the girls and women could focus on “She and Me.” Transportation

was available for families as needed.

At the end of the evening, each girl chose a board game, refurbished bicycle, or soccer ball to take home as a door prize. Grandparents from the school donated the bicycles, and another school’s soccer team provided the balls.

“She & Me” proved beneficial to both the girls and their mothers. While the children learned about pursuing higher education to achieve fulfilling careers, their mothers began to feel a sense of community at their daughters’ school. The event attracted families who had not attended school functions in the past and made them feel comfortable. In an evaluation that both mothers and daughters completed at the end of the evening, one mother wrote, “The girls learned a lot about the career women, and I believe they will carry this information throughout their years of growing.” A student confirmed this sentiment, writing that “She & Me” inspired her to “stay in school and work hard.”

Because of the event’s success, the school hopes to repeat “She & Me” in the future. Plans are also in the works to create a father-son night for third-grade boys.

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