

Publix Math Night

*River Springs Elementary School
Irmo, South Carolina*

One evening, over 600 people visited the same grocery store at the same time. Was a major weather event predicted? No, River Springs Elementary School students and their families showed up for a fun night of practicing math skills at Publix Math Night.

When a Publix supermarket manager, who happened to be a member of the School Improvement Council (SIC), sought ways to strengthen collaborations between her company and the school, she came up with the idea of Publix Math Night. As a result of the supermarket's sponsorship, River Springs provided an enjoyable and educational night for its students and their families at no cost.

When students and their families arrived at the store the night of the event, they received clues to solve math problems throughout the aisles of the store. Submitting their answers to a Publix employee earned each student a bag of treats donated by Publix. The class that had the most students participating received an ice cream party.

In order to plan the math night, grade-level chairs from River Springs visited the Publix to ensure the event's feasibility. Teachers then toured the store to determine which produce and other grocery items they could use for their clues and real-life-math problems. Publix management informed their staff about the event so that everyone could welcome the students and their families. The school newsletter, web page, and marquee, plus word of mouth, publicized the evening.

Because Publix provided both the venue and the prizes, school staff and parents needed to do very little to prepare for the event. Despite the high attendance, no problems occurred with traffic in the store. "Customers were thrilled when the activities were announced." Teachers appreciated the "overwhelming support" for the event, while one parent exclaimed, "The atmosphere was electrifying!" Thanks to the event's success, River Springs Elementary and Publix will continue to find new ways to collaborate for student achievement.

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