

Family Literacy Night

*Wing Luke Elementary School
Seattle, Washington*

Wing Luke Elementary School wanted to help students and families connect with peers and learn new reading techniques. So, the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), along with the Washington Reading Corps (WRC), developed Family Literacy Night as a vehicle to reach this goal.

Wing Luke Elementary boasts a diverse population, with seven major languages represented, making it a challenge to design an inclusive learning night. Volunteers translated publicity materials, including fliers, bulletins, and student-decorated invitations, into all these languages.

The ATP started planning for Family Literacy Night early by asking for donations from community businesses. The school received more than \$900 worth of food and raffle prizes, and never opened its checkbook for this activity.

On Family Literacy Night, teachers, staff, and AmeriCorps and other community volunteers ensured that things ran smoothly. Families signed in and enjoyed refreshments from Starbucks, Trader Joe's, and Noah's Bagels. They spent the next hour participating in timed and open stations. Timed stations included card making, Writer's Workshop, and a PageAhead Parent Workshop. Open stations included Sight Word BINGO, open microphone poetry, and a corner devoted to the Seattle Public Library. The public library staff used this opportunity to sign up families for library cards. The staff also distributed handouts, translated into the various languages,

which gave general library information, as well as literacy strategies for parents to use at home. The evening concluded with snacks, survey completion, a book giveaway, and raffles.

The response from the 198 participants and 8 school staff volunteers was overwhelmingly positive. One parent commented that attending Family Literacy Night brought "exposure to literature in so many different forms."

Wing Luke's ATP is excited about planning another Family Literacy Night next year. Team members will translate more materials into other languages and start planning early to secure enough donations.

*Elizabeth Urmenita, English Language
Development Reading Specialist
(206) 252-7630
elurmenita@seattleschools.org*