

ATP End-of-Year Celebration

*Pasco School District No. 1
Pasco, Washington*

The stars were shining brightly in Pasco on the evening of the district's first annual ATP End-of-Year Celebration. Over 200 Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) members and their spouses attended the Hollywood-themed event, hosted by Pasco's two district-level facilitators.

Planning for the celebration started in January. District leaders reserved the venue, secured donations, organized childcare, ordered the food, sent out professionally made invitations, and publicized the event through newsletters, ATP meetings, and "save the date" postcards.

The red-carpet affair included an awards ceremony and a poster showcase of the 16 schools' best practices. Attendees observed highlights from events that took place in other schools throughout the year, such as back-to-school picnics, poetry nights, and essay contests. Afterward, participants enjoyed a salmon and prime rib dinner served by high school students. While the guests enjoyed their dinner, an NNPS facilitator spoke about how to become an award-winning district.

Everyone who attended the End-of-Year Celebration left with more than just a full stomach. All ATPs received a digital camera and memory card, donated by Wal-Mart, along with an award certificate. Departing ATP chairs were recognized and given a paperweight, while every ATP member left with a personalized water bottle filled with popcorn and candy.

This celebration was not only fun, it was productive. The district leaders collected the

schools' 2006 UPDATE surveys before the big night. Schools who returned their UPDATE on time were entered into a raffle to win a free trip to the NNPS Leadership Development Conference in October.

Funds for Pasco's gala came primarily from district Title I funds and Wal-Mart donations. The cost to implement this practice was notable, but the professional development benefits were worth the effort. One guest commented: "This was one of the best programs I have attended."

Next year, the school district plans to find a larger venue, make more food, and clearly communicate to parents that childcare will be provided. They are already planning for an even bigger event!

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