

Turn Off the TV and Turn On Some Fun!

*Steeple Run Elementary School
Naperville, Illinois*

National Turn Off Your TV Week was marked by three opportunities to turn on some fun at Staple Run Elementary. On Monday of that week in April, families came to school in their pajamas for an evening of stories by guest readers and storytellers. On Wednesday, the school invited families to a math night at the local Home Depot store where students completed “real world” math activities. On Friday the school hosted a Dance Your Socks Off event for families.

The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) wanted to encourage families to participate by sponsoring alternative activities. At the same time, the team supported specific school learning goals with each of the three events and fostered partnerships with community businesses.

The reading night aimed to improve reading fluency, connect with the community, and continue to create a welcoming school environment. Guest readers included current and retired teachers, as well as a player from the Chicago Rush, an area football league team, who was a big hit with the students. A Barnes & Noble bookstore provided a costumed book character and set up a mini-bookstore where families could buy books that were read that night at a 20% discount. Families were encouraged to not only wear their pajamas, but also to bring a new pair of pajamas to donate to a local organization that supports foster children. About 100 pairs of PJs were donated.

The school initiated another partnership with a local ceramic company so that, for a small fee, families could create ceramic tiles that showed how school is important for their children. The tiles will be permanently mounted in the library.

Math night supported the School, Family and Community Partnership’s (SFPCP) goals to increase parent involvement, get more fathers

involved, and have students and parents enjoy math. Parents, teachers, and the math instructional coordinator developed real-world, grade-appropriate math activities focused on finishing a basement. Each activity was conducted at a station staffed by a parent or teacher volunteer and a Home Depot employee to help students and parents with their questions.

One student said the event was like a scavenger hunt because “you have to find things to solve the problems.” Three levels of difficulty were developed for each activity so that students could meet their grade-level’s math expectations. When students completed the activities, they went to the final check-in table for cookies and juice. Students also received bug catcher box kits to build that night and take home.

Finally, a good old-fashioned sock hop made the school more welcoming and fun for all. A local business donated popcorn and one family took charge of the music. Students were encouraged to decorate a pair of socks to wear. The evening included line dances, Limbo and the Hokey-Pokey – for all generations.

ATP members participated in every aspect of week. Teachers as well as parents took leadership roles on subcommittees and volunteered at each event. “It was wonderful to see all of the different groups coming together to support student learning and the local school,” said one organizer. “Parents seemed particularly pleased with the support from local businesses.”

The three activities cost \$275, with support coming from the school’s Home and School (parent organization) and from the district, where the superintendent provides funds for ATP activities. With all of this fun, it’s easy to imagine that some families at Steeple Run didn’t even miss TV.

*Michael Scorzo, Principal
(630) 420-6385
mscorzo@naperville203.org*