

Passport to Possibilities

Middle Township High School

Cape May Court House, New Jersey

What better way is there to foster a dialogue between school and community than to host a cultural fair where all are welcome? This is just what Middle Township High School did one evening in May with its Passport to Possibilities. The family event brought together musicians, performers and artists, and featured cultural booths and ethnic foods. Nearly 500 parents, family members and others from the community came to the fair.

“The attendees traveled throughout the school and tasted food, watched various performances and viewed student artwork and projects,” said one administrator.

This enjoyable educational event required a good amount of planning by the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP). Student involvement was crucial to the fair’s success. Teachers assigned projects that the students could research and present throughout the school. The foreign language and home economics classes prepared food from other cultures that could be sampled in the “Cultural Café,” and students created artwork, dances, and vocal and theatrical presentations.

In keeping with the theme, the students crafted passports that they took from area to area to get stamped during the fair, and later earned extra credit toward their class grade for submitting their passports to teachers. Middle Township High School did a wonderful job of integrating curriculum requirements with the planning and hosting of a community event.

Another key to the event’s success was the participation of community-based organizations. The Cape May County Museum displayed historical photographs and artifacts in two displays. The Kingdom of Luzerne held fencing demonstrations, craft demonstrations and theatrical performances in the gymnasium.

Enlisting performers for the event was the main challenge, as the ATP relied exclusively on personal contacts to find volunteer entertainers. The ATP publicized the fair in newspapers, on the radio, and through fliers and the school’s “Global Connect” system, which automatically phoned each student’s home to encourage the family to attend.

The fair celebrates diversity in the school while emphasizing community involvement in the educational process. By showcasing student talents and achievements, the fair promotes tolerance and mutual understanding not only within the school but also in the community at large.

Best of all, there were no costs involved. Staff members and community-based performers all volunteered their time in a true show of community spirit. The students supplied the projects and food as part of course requirements.

Overall, the event provided a fun-filled, informal setting where students, teachers, parents and community members could get to know one another. The administration was particularly pleased that nearly 600 students participated.

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