

Drive-Through Breakfast

*Wallace Gregg Elementary
Florence, South Carolina*

A poster at Wallace Gregg Elementary's Drive-Through Breakfast read "Honk if you like our service!" There was a lot of honking on September 29, 2006, when the teachers and administrators surprised parents with a drive-through breakfast at the school.

Beginning at 7 a.m., Action Team for Partnership (ATP) members served muffins and juice from rolling carts to the car line as parents dropped off their children. About 110 parents who enjoyed the drive-through service were thrilled. "What a nice surprise!" exclaimed one parent.

Teachers, assistants and the principal put breakfast items on carts and positioned them intermittently along the car line with teachers at each cart. Parents were asked to sign in on clipboards. In addition to breakfast, they also received a bookmark with tips for helping students with their homework. The "servers" made sure to tell parents that the school cared about them and appreciated their continued support.

The ATP wanted the breakfast to be a special treat and surprise. Therefore, it did not publicize the activity. It was a challenge to keep this activity a secret, as well as have faculty and staff commit to being at school before 7 a.m. for last-minute preparations.

ATP members initially brainstormed activity ideas while developing their One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships at an NNPS training session. The team members knew they wanted to give the parents a special "Thank You" for the academic and emotional support they provide their children. They also wanted an activity that would help meet the parent involvement goals from both the School Improvement Plan and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Plan. Because many parents drive their children to school, Wallace Gregg teachers believed that Drive-Through Breakfast would be the perfect activity.

Even though parents who do not drive their children to school were not able to partake in the breakfast, every parent received a copy of the bookmark of homework tips. These were designed to help parents better support their children's at-home learning. ATP members noted that many of the parents who could not participate in Drive-Through Breakfast did attend other delicious and informative events, such as Donuts for Dads, Muffins for Moms and Grits for Grandparents. The Principal's Coffee and Chat gatherings also acknowledged family support.

The ATP's advice to those wishing to implement this practice is to plan well, have a backup plan in case of rain, sign up enough staff or volunteers for the various tasks and make sure there is enough food. The school's plans for next year's event include involving the Florence Morning News and inviting district office personnel and other community members to participate.

"I could get used to this!" said one parent. Well, it won't happen every day, but it could be that someday, when they least expect it, parents will enjoy another Drive-Through Breakfast at Wallace Gregg.

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