

Fall Festival

*Tarrant Elementary School
Hampton, Virginia*

When Tarrant Elementary School's Second Annual Fall Festival ended, some people just didn't want to leave. They had such a good time at this community-wide event and wanted to ride more rides and play more games.

Held in the school and on the playground, the festival featured rides, concessions, a cakewalk and games planned by the teachers to mix fun and learning. One big reason for having the festival – other than fun – was to build community spirit among the families at the school and those that live in the apartment community that surrounds the school. More than 200 students attended with about 60 parents, 40 teachers and administrators and more than a dozen community members.

"Members of the community were able to visit and participate in this event to become familiar with the school population," said one of the festival organizers. "I'm glad you did it," said a festival-goer. "It was much bigger than last year," added another.

The event was filled with learning and recreational activities. Each grade-level team of teachers created a fall festival game. Every game had Standards of Learning (SOL) skills built into it. Staff members managed each station and students were able to apply their knowledge to these activities. The school's PTA sponsored the concessions and rides.

While the youngsters played games, parents were able to visit with teachers and other staff in an informal setting.

The festival cost about \$600, though much of that was covered by the sale of event tickets, cake walk tickets, food and drinks. In addition, the PTA, parents, community members, and organizations such as the West

Hampton Baptist Church all made donations – candy, cakes and small prizes for the game winners.

The school sent fliers to local businesses and faith-based organizations to get the word out that the festival was open to everyone in the community, not just those connected to the school.

Next year, the planners will do even more marketing to attract the neighbors. Perhaps those who did not want the festival to end will spread the word and encourage others to attend next fall.

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