

Grandparents' Day

*San Fernando Elementary School
Los Angeles, California*

San Fernando Elementary has found a wonderful way to honor people who are true heroes in many students' lives. These are the people who bring them to school, pick them up, help with homework, and, often, are care-givers while the students' parents are working. These heroes are grandparents. San Fernando Elementary honors them with a day all their own.

In two years, attendance at Grandparents' Day grew from 100 to 250 adults and children. Although it is widely publicized with fliers, posters, banners and school announcements in both Spanish and English, word-of-mouth worked the best, swelling the crowd well beyond expectations, organizers say.

On their day, grandparents are treated to breakfast with their grandchildren. Then, they visit their grandchildren's classroom, where special activities involve them in the day's projects. Some teachers interview the grandparents; others ask them to read to the class.

After the classroom visit, grandparents and students move to the cafeteria for a special activity. This year, they decorated picture frames and gingerbread figures. Teachers walked around taking photos of family groups so they could put the picture in the frame. The gingerbread figures showed an adult, symbolizing the grandparent, and a smaller figure representing the grandchild holding hands. This illustrated the bond of care and friendship between the two generations.

A committee of teachers and members of the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) plans the day and divides the responsibilities. It was important to have Spanish-speaking volunteers on hand because many of the grandparents speak only Spanish.

"Our vice principal came to welcome everyone, and once again, this was done in Spanish and English. We really wanted everyone to feel welcome and special," said the chairperson for the day.

The event cost about \$300, including food. It proved well worth the expense. Many of the visitors stopped by the office to say what a wonderful time they had. Teachers, too, were impressed with how nice the school looked and with the crowd of happy grandparents and their grandchildren.

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