

100th Day of School Celebration...with a Twist

*Ballentine Elementary School
Irmo, South Carolina*

Fourth-grade students at Ballentine Elementary celebrated their 100th day at school by counting and categorizing hundreds of items they collected for a local charity.

For the past four years, Ballentine has observed the 100th day of its school year with a “spectacular event” that includes all grades, with different activities for different grades. The younger children ate 100 Cheerios each at snack time and decorated their clothes with 100s. For past events, the fourth-graders read 100 books each, worked together to write 100-word poems, and made graphs of 100 items. This year seven fourth-grade teachers put a twist on the 100th Day of School Celebration.

They decided to merge the 100-day event with a goal in their School Improvement Plan—encouraging students to participate in community service projects. The teachers asked each fourth-grade classroom to collect 100 personal hygiene items for a local charity. They donated the items to a local outreach center called Sharing God’s Love.

The project was a great success, with the students far exceeding the goal of 700 items. At least one class went so far over its goal that it was a challenge to store all of the donated items—a mark of true success, according to school officials. Before the donations were delivered to needy individuals, however, the students had some work to do.

Teachers set aside their morning meeting periods to discuss the donations and to count them. On the 100th day of school, each class tallied its grand total. Then the students in math classes separated the items by category, such as toothpaste, hand soap, combs, and brushes. They calculated percentages, and made brightly colored pie charts with illustrations. Teachers had students come up with averages for the number of bottles of shampoo and tooth brushes across classes.

More than 120 students and 240 parents worked on the 100-item drive. The project garnered great reviews from just about everyone. “Parents stepped up by making sure their child had items to donate; teachers helped each other and devised a place to put the items; community members came to make sure the items got to our charity,” said one of the organizers. “The students’ excitement drove the project. This activity was a perfect example of our district’s motto: All hands pulling on the same rope.”

People at the outreach center were equally impressed by the students’ efforts. “It was nice to see the kids caring about the community,” one said.

The fourth-grade team is certain it will have a similar project next year. The teachers plan to involve their students from the beginning, in coming up with an idea and suggesting charities.

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