

Family Fitness Fair

*Starr King Elementary School
Long Beach, California*

Prizes galore attracted the children and families of Starr King Elementary School to its Family Fitness Fair last March. The third annual fair drew 150 students and 250 parents and caregivers to the school for three hours of fun with a purpose.

The school's action team, the King Parent Involvement Committee (KPIC), developed and planned the fair with assistance from students on the Nutrition Advisory Council, teachers, and the PTO. The action team wanted to establish an event that would promote the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity, as well as give families access to state and local organizations and services linked to wellness. A dozen community organizations—including a children's clinic, city health department, a nature center and youth sports office—set up booths to distribute pamphlets and other information on their services.

The main event for students and families was a trip through five stations, where they stamped the "passports" that they received at the door, upon completing the activities. Station activities included "Ask the Doctor," yoga, dance, basketball, and a healthy snack booth. At each station, volunteers demonstrated physical activity or provided nutrition information, modeled an activity, and asked visitors to participate. Once families had completed all the activities and had full passports, they turned the proof into the fair's raffle stall, making the whole family eligible for prizes. The KPIC held raffles every 15 minutes.

There were plenty of other activities to keep parents and children busy, including an obstacle course, a jumping activity and a "Run a Mile for a Prize" race. The PTO sponsored a jumper where students who had completed four out of five fitness stations and turned in their passports could spend three minutes exercising.

Prizes for the raffle included sailing lessons, tickets to a Los Angeles Dodgers baseball game, a gym pass for two from Califor-

nia State University at Long Beach, and gift cards from restaurants and retail stores. Each classroom donated a gift basket with a healthy food or activity theme. These were given away, too.

This year's fair had the highest attendance yet. Fair attendees were very positive about the event. Many were excited by the activities.

"Having fun exercising like this makes school more fun!" a student proclaimed.

"This is a great example of the effort and collaboration of Starr King's students, staff and community going beyond the bell-to-bell instruction to benefit our students," a teacher commented.

The fair did not cost the school any money because area businesses donated their services and prizes. This year, the KPIC and school administrators increased the number of volunteers to manage and accommodate the crowds. Next year, they would like to have more parents and community members assume leadership roles.

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