

## Health and Wellness Fair

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*Eastern Greenbrier Middle School  
Ronceverte, West Virginia*

The Dance Dance Revolution (DDR) craze swept through Eastern Greenbrier Middle School last April during the school's Health and Wellness Fair. The event, organized by the school's Action Team for Partnership (ATP), encouraged community participation by qualifying students for a DDR tournament if they brought a family member to the event. The same students also qualified to enter a basketball tournament.

The ATP took the lead role in planning the fair. Members of the group reached out to parents, many of whom work in the health care industry. Partnering with these parents enabled the ATP to arrange a series of booths operated by local health professionals. Dentists, physical therapists, and hospitals handed out informational brochures on vaccinations and healthy lifestyle choices. They also offered free health screenings to fair attendees. One parent, a local fireman, handed out a brochure on fire safety. Booth attendants, in turn, appreciated the free publicity.

Approximately 40 students and 30 parents attended the informational event. In addition to mingling with the booth occupants, families also informally met with teachers, who kept busy by running the contests and handing out healthy refreshments. Several parents commented that they especially appreciated the nutritious food. "I have to get the recipe," said one parent, after sampling a nutritious dip.

The main draws of the Health and Wellness Fair were the contests, which encouraged physical activity. Students sweated their way to DDR victory, locking their eyes on the video screen and bouncing up and down on the electronic floor pad. On a basketball court not far away, another group of middle-schoolers honed their jump shot, using their arm muscles to their full advantage in a 3 point shot competition. The top three finalists in both competitions received T-shirts to commemorate their wins.

The ATP created an atmosphere that made even the novice athlete feel comfortable. One DDR participant reveled in the un-intimidating, non-competitive atmosphere. "I can't believe I won the DDR contest! I had never done it before."

The ATP advertised the fair in the local newspaper and on the school's web site. They also sent out e-mail reminders to area parents and utilized an automated phone service that left messages on families' answering machines.

The group's main challenge for the event was the weather. Earlier in the year, the fair had been scheduled for February, but snow and ice caused a postponement. The school expected higher attendance, but the new date was not as well publicized as the original. Next year the group plans on scheduling the health fair in tandem with another school event, so that more students and families will be able to participate.

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