

Games from Around the World

*Ruth Livingston Elementary School
Pasco, Washington*

Family board game night took on an international and educational twist last March during Ruth Livingston Elementary School's Games from Around the World event.

The idea came from two Livingston students who entered Pasco School District's annual Family Involvement Essay Contest. In the contest, district officials solicited children to invent an event to bring their parents into the school and increase positive home-school relationships. The two grand prize-winning students wrote that they wanted an "Around the World Night" and a "Family Board Game Night." Combining the two, school administrators proposed an international board game event. The school received \$500 in prize money from the district to implement the activity.

Action Team for Partnership (ATP) members, along with 20 additional teacher and high school volunteers, assisted in the planning of the event. The first task on the ATP's "To-Do List" was to purchase around 25 different games from around the world, including Jenga, Jacks, Hop Scotch, Chinese Checkers, and Mancala. These games were on display in the school's library to generate excitement and to advertise the game extravaganza.

On the night of the event, about 250 parents and children participated. Volunteers greeted the participants at the school door and gave each family member a passport and a world map. The map featured eight countries, with pictures of their national flags, geographic locations, and commonly played games. The maps also gave students a series of "fun facts" about the games.

Parent-child teams made their way around the gymnasium, shooting marbles, or jumping rope, all the while learning new and interesting details about different cultures. As students completed games at each station, they received a passport stamp signifying that they had visited that country. Every student who attended Games from Around the World

entered a raffle for a chance to win one of the games from the event. At the end of the night, a teacher and a student from the local high school invited families to have their photos taken together.

School staff and families were thrilled by the combination of fun and learning. "The event was a huge success! We loved the passport. Your school did an awesome job, we had a blast!" one parent said.

Community support helped to keep the price of the event low. A local craft business created and donated the passports and Toys R Us discounted the cost of the games. In total, Games from Around the World cost Livingston Elementary about \$350.

ATP members, students, and parents unanimously voted to continue the Games from Around the World next year! Plans for the 2008-09 event are already in the works.

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