

Laurel Ridge Elementary School located in Decatur, GA hosted its first ever Groove-a-Thon fundraiser on February 26, 2010. The concept was to promote health and wellness, particularly physical activity through dance, and by providing healthy snack choices during the dance. We raised money for the school by asking donors to sponsor a child to participate in the dance, at whatever sponsorship level they chose. Examples of sponsorship levels were: \$5/Happy Feet \$10/Movin' and Groovin' \$15/Twistin' and Shoutin' \$20/Touchin' the Sky or \$/Other. Students collected pledges before the dance, and we also had a donation bag the night of the dance, for those who still wanted to make a contribution. The top pledge-earner was announced the night of the Groove-a-Thon, and got a certificate of recognition to take home. We also sold healthy snacks for \$.50 each - water, cheese/crackers, fruit chews, frozen yogurt, granola bars, Sun Chips, and 100% fruit juice.

We promoted the Groove-a-Thon in several ways. The take home pledge form was on bright pink paper with a Groove-a-Thon logo on it. We put up posters in the hallways, and listed it on the marquee in front of the school. And our best form of promotion was having the emcee/DJ make announcements over the loudspeaker every morning before school. She would sing a clip from a dance song, remind kids about the dance, and then ask a dance related trivia question for fun. One of the fifth grade patrols would try to answer and it went over very well.

The night of the dance, Groove-a-Thon participants were asked to wear their favorite dance outfit from their favorite decade i.e. 50's, 60's, 70's etc. The kids absolutely loved the chance to dress up, and show off their moves on the dance floor. We had one of the teachers emcee the event, as she announced upcoming dance numbers that required specific dance moves. Then a parent leader would stand in front and lead the kids through the dance. We had a variety of dances from the YMCA, a conga line, and even a belly dance. To decorate the cafeteria, we marked off a dance floor with green tape and put balloons in the four corners. This helped kids stay "in the zone" and made it have a more cozy feel. We hung musical notes and mini record albums from the ceiling. We also had a disco ball and strobe light on the stage. Our music was done via iPod which made it very easy to repeat popular songs or take a few requests.

We started planning our event a few months before, in late fall, sketching out a basic plan and coming up with a name. We met a couple more times to hone in on the details and were able to get the rest done via e-mail. Our committee has four members, and a couple of other PTA members were helpful in generating ideas. In addition, we had about four teachers and parents who volunteered to help decorate, sell food, or lead dances on the actual night of the dance.

The goal was to raise \$300 and we raised a total of \$717.05 minus the cost of the snacks (\$110.05). We are thrilled as we are planning on purchasing an outdoor composting system for the school's garden. If we were to win the \$1,000 award we would spend the money on an outdoor classroom to go with the garden and composter. This will consist of benches and various centers where students can learn things like the stages of composting, which flowers grow in shade vs. sun, how plants are vital to sustain other life forms, etc.

Currently we do not have a community partner in collaboration with this particular project, but we would be exploring that option much further if we win the award. Businesses such as ACE Hardware, Whole Foods, and Publix should be willing participants in such an endeavor. We have a Boy Scout who is doing an outdoor construction project for our school, so I would like to tap him as a resource as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration in choosing our school as a winner for the the Healthy Fundraising Award. We would be overjoyed if we won and would put the money to excellent use!