

“CARnival” of Arts Family Night

Wamsley Elementary School

Rifle, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Holding events in the community can be a great way to engage students, families, educators, and community members all at one time. At Wamsley Elementary School, a family arts night was held at a local car dealership that helped to involve the community in a school event. The goal of the event was to engage families in a non-threatening environment, foster relationships with the community, celebrate the arts at Wamsley, and support math and reading skills.

The CARnival had many activities developed by school grade level teams, such as ring toss and cup stacking. When possible, math skills were incorporated into the games. Student artwork was also displayed throughout the event, and there were student musical presentations. Grade level art awards were given out, with students receiving scholarships from the car dealership. School staff and the PTA planned the CARnival, and grade level teachers split up the responsibilities, including planning logistics and soliciting prizes from the community.

This event helped support the idea that learning can happen anywhere, not just in school, and that families can always be a part of that learning. CARnival is seen as a great way to engage every student and family, to encourage their participation in school, and to form partnerships with them. By engaging parents with their child in a laid back and fun environment, and interacting with the teachers, the school hoped to involve those parents at a higher level in their child’s education.

Wamsley staff believe that advertising, planning, and distributing leadership were all critical when planning this event, and recommend this type of an approach for any other school considering an event such as this one. Continual communication that began early with families about the event was one of the most important factors in order to ensure that families could attend the event.