



Kids First Wellness Advocates Series
Better (and Bigger!) Fundraising
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by Kelly Swanson, Kids First Communications

Coventry – Fundraising has become a fairly challenging issue with the push for wellness and healthier schools. Schools are encouraging more nutritious school food and more physical activity, yet many popular school fundraisers involve selling less-than-nutritious treats.

Coventry's Blackrock Elementary School has adopted a very successful fundraiser that is a winner for everyone involved. After years of running the traditional fundraisers of pie and cookie dough sales, the Blackrock PTA decided to take a healthier (and easier) route. School year 2008-2009 saw the first annual Blackrock Buzz-A-Thon, a walk-a-thon open to all students, from pre-school to 5th grade. ("Buzz" because the school mascot is a bumble bee)



Early in the school year, students raise money from sponsors – family members and friends, no door-to-door soliciting. Buzz-A-Thon Day is an exciting one! Students, teachers and parents in each grade dress in a different color, and take turns walking around Blackrock's track, making money the healthy way!

Students love the Buzz-A-Thon mostly because it's fun, and it gives them an opportunity to spend time with their classmates outside the classroom. For raising a minimal amount of money, students get a commemorative Blackrock Buzz-A-Thon T-shirt!

Parents love the Buzz-A-Thon because they can participate in a healthy physical activity with their children, and at the same time, they don't feel obligated to buy cookie dough or other merchandise they may not want.



School staff and the PTA love the Buzz-A-Thon because it is simple to set up, it is run with low overhead and it is easier than more involved catalog sales which almost always cause problems with lost or incorrect orders, damaged products, or issues with product storage and pickup at the school.

Best of all, in the two years it has run, the once-a-year Buzz-A-Thon has raised more money than the three fundraisers it replaced *combined*, all while promoting wellness through physical activity.

"The Buzz-A-Thon has been a great success," says Alicia Castle, principal of Blackrock. "It makes money to pay for all the fun activities the PTA runs during the school year, it builds community and friendship among our students, staff and parents, and we all get a little exercise in the process!"