

Lindsey Learning Center Walk-A-Thon



Stacey Sisler

Three hundred and fifty 7th graders at Windsor Knolls Middle School participated in a walk-a-thon that raised approximately \$16,000 for the Lindsey Learning Center and Bread of Life Soup Kitchen of the Frederick Rescue Mission, an organization in Frederick County that helps people who are homeless and in need. Through their curricular classes, students learned about homelessness, planning a fundraiser, and used other skills that made the walk-a-thon a huge success. [Best practices:](#)

- The Frederick Rescue Mission had a need to raise their budget for the next fiscal year and they were focusing their efforts on the budget for the Lindsey Learning Center and the Bread of Life Soup Kitchen. The Lindsey Learning Center provides education skills and opportunities for people in Frederick who need to improve their skills before they can find a job that will provide enough for them. The Soup Kitchen serves those in need and hungry in Frederick. By helping to provide a budget for these services, they can continue to exist and help the citizens of Frederick. Our walk-a-thon met that need by raising funds through Help the Homeless and a matching grant associated with the fundraising effort.
- Students used skills from many of their curricular classes. They used reading and writing skills to read information about homelessness, to write press releases for the media invited to report on the walk-a-thon, and to write reflections about their experiences throughout the fundraising. They used math skills to calculate an estimate of the funds raised, to graph the progress of the fundraising, and to reflect on the amount of money raised compared to the amount of effort they had to put into the service project. They also studied various aspects of homelessness in their science, health, and social studies classes. The students even designed and learned the walking route in their gym classes.
- Students reflected on this experience in a number of different ways. They wrote about the problem of homelessness, they predicted costs for running such services as their walk-a-thon was going to benefit, and they calculated and discussed the ease of the project compared to the amount of money they raised. They also held class discussions after reading a short story about homelessness, and many other types of reflection activities.
- As part of the planning process for the walk-a-thon, there were students who volunteered to be part of a student leadership committee. They were responsible for greeting and escorting guests at a kick-off assembly, for participating as speakers and encouragers at the assembly, for creating and leading committees to help in various organizational parts of the walk, and to greet and escort guests on the day of the walk. Community Partnerships: A partnership was created with the Frederick Rescue Mission through their contact with us in helping to make the walk-a-thon a success.
- The seventh grade team of teachers, planned how we envisioned the walk-a-thon would develop in the different curricular areas. We also considered the idea for the kick-off assembly and for making sure there would be student leaders in the project. All the 7th graders were given a lesson in SSL101. Logistic plans were also made for the day of the walk.
- Students were taught about service learning to begin the project. They were also given a knowledge base about homelessness and about the Frederick Rescue Mission. They reinforced skills they have from other classes through the activities they did leading up to and including the walk-a-thon.

