

CHAPTER 1

Creating a Fun, Rewarding School Climate

An essential element for successful schools is a fun, rewarding climate. Think about where you do your best work. Is it in a place where your efforts are recognized and you feel appreciated? Do you have fun when you are there? Recognition, appreciation, fun, laughter, collegial sharing, celebrations—these contribute to the quality of our lives and to those of the people around us. On the other hand, how many of you are sick of all the recognition you receive at work? How many of you say, “I wish my boss would quit telling me what a great job I am doing so I can actually get some work done” or “If those parents would just quit calling me every day to tell me how much I am appreciated . . .”?

You probably don’t experience that enough.

“You can dream, create, design, and build the most wonderful place in the world,” Walt Disney said, “but it requires people to make the dream a reality.” A school’s most valuable resource leaves each night and returns the next morning. A district can have the newest state-of-the-art facility and the best curriculum, but if it doesn’t have motivated staff members to meet the students’ educational needs, then those assets don’t mean anything.

Careers have a cycle. For those of us in education, it typically began in college when we majored in subject areas, took our methods courses, worked as an intern-teacher, and so on. Then we received our first job offer. Think back to that moment. Remember the excitement you felt? Who was the first person you called? Do you remember how thrilled you were that you were going to actually *be* an educator and make a difference in the lives of your students? Do you remember how energized and motivated you were?

Men and women want to do a good job, a creative job, and if they are provided the proper environment, they will do so.

—Bell Hewlett



Shortly after we began those first jobs, we discovered that we hadn't learned all of the skills necessary for success. We then got some on-the-job training, sought coaching from mentors and principals, and developed new skills. As we gained competencies, we also gained confidence. This combination put us in the career cycle of being *enthusiastic* and *growing*. Wouldn't it be great if we spent our entire careers being enthusiastic and growing—if we loved what we were doing so much that we greeted each day with energy and a positive attitude and we continued to try new things and to make an effort to become better every day?

At some point, everyone experiences *career frustrations*. Have you been there yet? If not, you will get there eventually. Your enthusiasm, and perhaps your energy, will diminish. The goal in this situation is to get back to being enthusiastic and growing. However, people can sometimes move into a stage of being *stable* and *stagnant*. Being stable might be OK for a while because you are at least maintaining the status quo, but stagnating is not good. Look around your school. You can probably identify which staff members are in that stage of the career cycle. They are the ones who are unwilling to try anything new or serve on a committee.

When an unmotivated staff member is not using his or her full potential, consider that person's supervisor. Has the supervisor helped the staff member reach his or her full potential in the job? It is incumbent upon the supervisor to establish or allow a supportive environment where people can be their best. If someone is not enthusiastic about work, it is the supervisor's responsibility to find out why and to determine how to best help that person regain his or her lost enthusiasm. If someone has reached the career frustration stage, how do you get that person (or you) back to being enthusiastic and growing? First, you have to ask if it is an achievable goal. I used to tell my staff, "If you can't whistle on your way to work, you don't belong in that job." And I believe that not all educators should be in education. We need to help them into other careers, grade levels, job assignments—whatever it takes to get them whistling on their way to work. It is important to ask, one on one, "What do you like doing? What lights your fire?" If the person is feeling burned out, then he or she must have been lit up at some time. What did that look like? What was the person doing? During this career development process, it is important that the person understands that the lack of enthusiasm might be caused by a mismatch between his or her skills and the job requirements, or a mismatch of personality types with the supervisor or coworkers—all of which could be resolved by a different setting or career area.

There's a big difference between getting people to come to work and getting them to do their best.

—Bob Nelson



RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION



What keeps educators excited and motivated? Two basic ingredients are *recognition* and *appreciation* from colleagues, administrators, parents, students, and the community for a job well done. People want to be excited about what they do. No one gets up in the morning and says, “I think I will just be mediocre today.” People want to do a good job and, given the proper environment and encouragement, they will. Likewise, no one gets up in the morning and says, “I am going to do a great job today—I have dental insurance!” Although important, the strongest motivators are not monetary rewards or benefits. People want to be appreciated for what they do. And when their supervisor and colleagues give recognition and appreciation on their behalf, people do their best.

Currently, there are 3.2 million teachers working in U.S. public schools. It is estimated that by the year 2015, a total of 2.8 million new teachers will need to be hired. Given this, recruiting and retaining good staff members is going to become increasingly important.

Most of us would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism.

—Norman Vincent Peale



“I hope it's not too much of an inconvenience for you, but I'm desperate to hold on to our good teachers.”

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People will forget what you said.

People will forget what you did.

But people will not forget how you made them feel.

—Unknown

Unfortunately, the teaching profession has a high turnover rate. An estimated 30% of new teachers quit the profession within the first three years (*Time*, February 25, 2008). It has become increasingly difficult for teachers to support their families with just their salaries. Also, in teaching, there is little motivation for excellence; people who are in education do not receive profit-sharing, bonuses, promotions, and so on, which are motivators and rewards in other career fields. The career ladder for a teacher is a very short one: a teacher reaches the top of the career ladder the first day he or she enters the classroom. That's why recognition and appreciation become important motivators.

Let's clarify the difference between *compensation* and *recognition*—these two items are very different. Some people will say that staff members are recognized every other week—it's called a paycheck. Wrong! That's *compensation*. Compensation is what employees receive for a job assigned to them; it's financial remuneration. Recognition is what employees receive for efforts above and beyond what the job requires of them. "Compensation is a right," says management consultant Rosabeth Moss Kanter. "Recognition is a gift."

Formal and Informal Recognition

Recognition can be given in two ways—*formally* and *informally*. *Formal* awards are predetermined ones given for achievement. It is important to determine what behaviors you want to reward during the year.

Leaders . . . send very clear signals about what's important!

—Tom Peters

Some behaviors you may want to reward include the following:

- Attendance
- Years of service
- Student achievement
- Community/school relations
- Parent participation
- Submitting student grades on time
- Helping colleagues
- Mentoring new staff members
- Demonstrating a positive attitude
- Trying new things
- Taking a leadership role
- Teamwork
- Safety

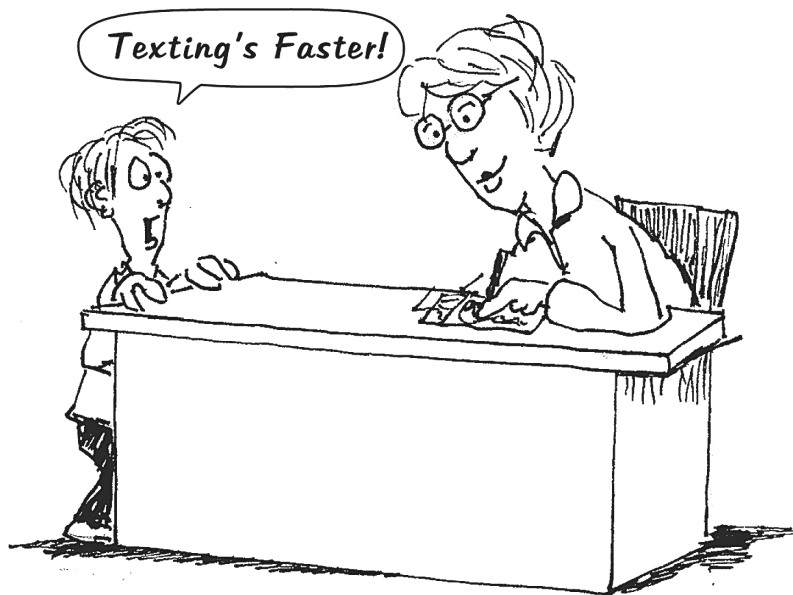


- Giving suggestions for improvement
- Professional development outside of school
- Heroism

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.

—Aristotle

Informal recognition is more flexible and spontaneous. An example of this might be a note of thanks for a job well done or acknowledgment at a staff meeting. “Thank you” is a very powerful expression. Everyone knows how to say it, but do they do it? Although texts and e-mails are much faster, realize that the *e* in *e-mail* often stands for *easy*.



People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing—that's why we recommend it daily.

—Zig Ziglar

People like to receive handwritten notes—it is seen as a much more permanent form of communication. Make it a habit to give spontaneous praise, but also schedule time to write thank-you notes. Every few days, reflect on the good things you have observed and let those people know you appreciate their efforts. Make sure that everyone gets a note at some time during the year or semester. If you can't think of something nice to say to someone . . . why not?

How do you make sure you are giving enough praise? Give a high five. Look around each day, and find five people that deserve a compliment. Then, give them one. Count the five compliments on your hand and make sure you have given them all out before moving on to another activity.



I can live two months on a good compliment.

—Mark Twain

Catch them doing something right.

—Kenneth Blanchard

Giving recognition requires a certain degree of mindfulness. It needs to be all of the following:

Timely—Don't delay praise. The recognition needs to be given near the time of the performance. Waiting to give the recognition at the end of the school year may cause it to lose its impact, but if it's delivered in a timely fashion, the recognition could continually motivate the individual and other staff members throughout the year.

Sincere—The recognition needs to be genuine: give it only when it is deserved. Giving an across-the-board recognition lacks sincerity.

Specific—Recognition is a process, not a product. People have told me that their school's recognition program consists of giving all staff members a "You Are Appreciated" mug, card, or other product during staff appreciation week. How special do you feel when everyone is given the exact same thing on a specified day on the calendar? What is the individual being appreciated for? What behavior are you praising? Specify what the staff member worked on and what he or she accomplished.

There are some wonderful recognition products available, and I highly recommend that every supervisor create a Pause for Applause drawer. Keep a supply of recognition items on hand to spontaneously give to staff members for achievements. The items might include Thank You, You Are Appreciated, and Teamwork certificates, pins, notepads, coffee cups, tote bags, pens, water bottles, mouse pads, and so on, which can be ordered from companies such as Positive Promotions (www.positivepromotions.com) and others. You can keep a stock of candy bars, buttons, and stickers as well. Then, when the moment is right, you can choose something that's perfect for the occasion.

Positive—Don't add a *but* when giving the praise. Deliver only a compliment.

You will likely find that staff members are more motivated by informal incentives than by formal ones. They want spontaneous recognition based on their performance rather than an award for something such as years of service.

Not all administrators give recognition. Some people may need to practice giving praise. They may have not been raised with it, may not have had role models, or may simply lack the skills. Those who are most comfortable giving praise typically had parents who used recognition techniques.

Others feel that giving recognition is not part of their job description. Whose responsibility is it then? Actually, it is everyone's.



Peer recognition is very powerful, but staff members also need top-down recognition. If the superintendent and Board of Education value recognition, it becomes a priority. Make it a district goal, and have each school or department develop a yearly recognition plan. Each week, have the administrators give examples of how they recognized their staff. Make this an accountable activity.

Some people might claim they don't have time to give praise and recognition, but that's just an excuse. You make time for the things you value. Most of the types of praise that employees rate as the most motivating—such as personal notes, verbal words of praise, and so on—don't take much time. If you sometimes feel awkward expressing appreciation, rest assured that there is hope. This book abounds with ideas that can help you and your colleagues develop the ability to comfortably give recognition and appreciation. One small step you can take right away is to say that staff members work *with* you, not *for* you. This is especially valuable when you are introducing people from the staff to others. Just a change in those words will have a big impact. Another idea is to add a dash of theater to the praise—make it a fun, glorious event (if you know the recipient will appreciate the display). And if you truly are not a fun person, then allow others to lead in this endeavor: it needs to happen with you or in spite of you.

Recognition is so easy to do and so inexpensive to distribute that there is no excuse for not doing it.

—Rosabeth Moss Kanter

Here is my best advice for developing a recognition plan:

1. **Staff members should be part of the development and implementation of the plan.** Form a group that has representatives from all employee groups (e.g., teachers, administrative assistants, custodians, those that work in transportation). The group is then responsible for the successes and the things that were not big hits.
2. **The program should be visible to others—both internally to co-workers and students and externally to parents and the community.**
3. **Change the program often so that it stays fresh with new ideas and activities.** Doing the same things becomes routine and expected—an entitlement rather than a reward. Keep the creativity alive and fun.
4. **Recognition and rewards need to be given in a variety of forms, depending on the individual.** Each person is unique and, because of that, the way people want to be treated varies.

You can hire people to work for you, but you must win their hearts to have them work with you.

—Anthony Jay

The best recognition programs inspire people to new levels of performance, helping the ordinary people attain extraordinary results in the workplace.

—Bob Nelson



You may never know when a moment and a few sincere words can have an impact on life.

—Zig Zigler

Good words are worth much and cost little.

—Dag Hammarskjöld

One size does not fit most. It is important to know colleagues and how they like to be recognized. Some people are auditory, some are visual, and others are kinesthetically oriented. And some are a combination of the three.

Auditory—People in this category like to *hear* their recognition. They are the ones who like compliments and want their praise to be public, so give public praise to those who like to be recognized that way. One of the goals is to encourage the individual staff member while also encouraging others to make greater efforts. Praising in public is a good way to raise general morale.

Make it a habit to give compliments every day. You will find that you think wonderful thoughts but frequently don't tell the person. As Ken Blanchard said, "Good thoughts not delivered mean squat." Make a difference in someone's day and see the effect it has on you . . . and others.

When someone does something well, applaud! You will make two people happy!

—Samuel Goldwyn

As you begin to be more aware of giving compliments, you will see an increase in the number of compliments you receive. It will take practice for you to accept these compliments. We are conditioned from an early age not to brag. If we promoted ourselves by saying things such as "I can run really fast" or "I look great in this new outfit," inevitably someone would say, "Stop bragging." So we tend to feel embarrassed when someone gives us a compliment. We do not have enough practice in receiving this type of praise to feel comfortable.

Most of us will deny or deflect compliments. For instance, if someone tells you, "Your outfit looks great on you," how would you respond? Ideally, you would respond by saying something like, "Thank you. I really feel good when I wear this!" But it's more likely that you would deny the compliment by saying something such as "I do not" or "This old thing? I got it on sale" or "It looked a lot a better on me 10 pounds ago." You may find yourself deflecting the compliment by returning a compliment, "So does yours . . . really . . . you look great." We need to practice receiving and learn how to accept compliments. Enjoy your applause.

Visual—You will recognize these people. They are the ones who look up their names when the new phone book is delivered. They want to find their name in print and see if it is spelled correctly. They like to see their recognition. These people want their appreciation to be in the form of a physical item such as a certificate, plaque, letter, card, award, memo, or gift. With these people, there is a lot of give and take. If you



give recognition such as a certificate, then they want you to *take* a picture. They want this recognition event to be captured and displayed in the staff lounge, district newsletter, local newspaper, or on the bulletin board. They want others to see their recognition and to comment on it.



Kinesthetic—These people are more touch oriented. They need to have a sensory experience through physical connection and motion. They like to have appreciation conveyed through a pat on the back or a handshake. These people are often the ones who like to hug, but hugging can be misconstrued as sexual harassment, so be careful if you express appreciation in this way.

So let's take a little test. Look at the cartoon. What is she? Auditory? Visual? Kinesthetic?



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I am sure the principal thought he was doing something very nice for the administrative assistant. He was likely thinking that when she turned on her computer in the morning, she would be greeted with a "Thank you." In reality, it was not as well received as he imagined. What did she want him to do? She wanted to *hear* his words of thanks—she wanted him to come out of his office and personally deliver the message.

How do you know how each person wants to be recognized? Ask them! At the start of the school year, ask staff members to complete a form about themselves, such as the one shown here.

With so many ways to reward people, you may ask, "How do I decide how to reward each person?" The answer is simple: Ask them.


—Michael LeBoeuf






WHEN WE PAUSE FOR APPLAUSE!

Tell us about you . . .

 How do you like to be recognized? I am . . .

-  Auditory—I like to *hear* the praise (e.g., compliment)
- Privately
 - Publically
 - Both
- Visual—I like to *see* my recognition
- Privately—personal notes, sticky notes, and so on
 - Publically—published praise in newsletters, bulletin boards, lounge, Web page, and so on
 - Both
- Kinesthetic—I like to *feel* my recognition
- Handshake
 - Pat on the back
 - Hug

I feel more motivated when I receive recognition from . . .

- My peers
- My principal or supervisor
- Both

What is your favorite . . .


Candy? _____


Snack food? _____

Salty food? _____

Soft drink? _____

What kind of treat don't you like? _____

What is your favorite type of music? _____ 

 What are your hobbies or interests? _____

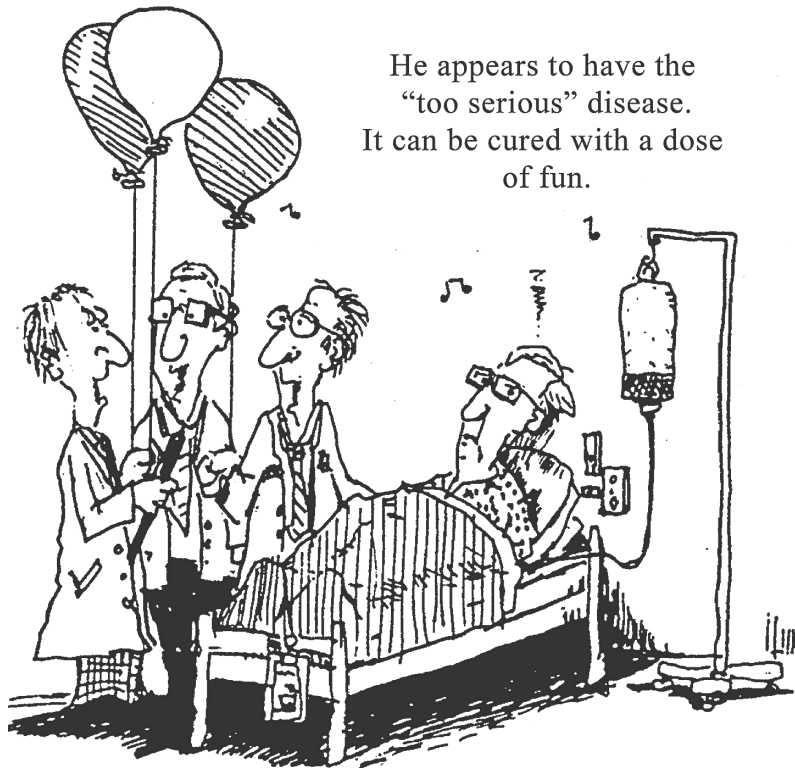


Keep the forms on file as a reference in an easily accessible location. Then, when you or other colleagues want to show recognition to a staff member, refer to the information to find the perfect way to do it. As new staff members are hired, include this form as part of the orientation process.

FUN



Another way to motivate staff members is to create a work environment that is fun. Dale Carnegie said, “People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing.” A common misconception is that if you are having fun, then you aren’t working. I once heard a speaker say, “If you want to have fun at work, then work at Disney World—don’t look for it in a school.” Oh my! Many people suffer from the disease of being too serious.



It is possible to be professional, achieve goals, and enjoy your way to success. Could it be that when you incorporate fun into the workplace, the result will be an increase in teamwork, a decrease in absenteeism (“Monday migraines”), reduced stress, and an improved



Work hard and smart, but have fun as well. The more fun you have the more productive you will be.

—Abe
Bakhsheshy

Fun in the workplace is being able to interject something that is entertaining while still accomplishing your work responsibilities.

—Joe Mullenax

sense of balance between personal and professional lives? As many organizations are reporting, the answer is YES! Would a person feel revitalized in an organization where there was excitement, support, and celebrations? Would there be an increase in staff morale and productivity? Again—YES! Laughter and play help colleagues to connect because they speak a common language of joy.

After you've laughed together, you're much more tolerant of each other.

—Matt Weinstein

We spend more time at work than anywhere else, so we should enjoy our work life. In order to have a fun working environment, you have to have fun people working there. I travel a great deal, and it seems that to get from San Diego to anywhere, I have to go through O'Hare Airport in Chicago. The process of going through security can often be tedious. On one trip, I gave my identification to a TSA employee, and when she returned it, she smiled and said, "Have a marvelous Monday." As the author of *Looking Forward to Monday Morning*, I was taken aback. I asked her what she would have said if it had been a Tuesday. She said she has a response for each day of the week. She proceeded to tell me all of them.

- *Marvelous Monday*
- *Terrific Tuesday*
- *Wonderful Wednesday*
- *Tremendous Thursday*
- *Fabulous Friday*
- *Sensational Saturday*
- *Super Sunday*

She put a smile on everyone's face by sharing her positive attitude—and she seemed to genuinely enjoy her job.

It is important to hire fun people. When you post an open job, list *sense of humor* as one of the qualities you are seeking. Include *fun* in the job interview. For example, give the interviewees some Silly Putty and see how they react. Ask them to tell you a clean joke, ask them to describe their ideal work environment, or ask them to share how they once added humor to a stressful situation. Have the candidate work for a day with staff to see how they fit in.

If you want to attract fun people to work at your school, then you need to let the community know that your workplace is fun. Report "April Fools," "Human Sundae," and other fun events in your local



and district newsletter. Word will spread. When you are creating or revising your mission statement, include all of the essentials and end it with a statement such as “and enjoy the journey.”

The best way to infuse fun into an organization is by example. But what if you have a boss who isn't fun? What if you are convinced that he or she would never plan and implement a fun activity? Two teachers spoke with me after one of my presentations. They shared that they had a new principal and the climate had changed from fun to glum. One said, “We are just going to have to have fun in spite of him. We will be the Ambassadors of Fun for the school.” As they left, I heard one say, “Today was the first time I have laughed in two weeks.” If you are facing a similar situation, appoint yourself as one of the following:

CHO (Chief Happiness Officer)

Manager of Mirth

Ambassador of Play

Director of Positive Attitudes

Funmeister

Minister of Fun

Pep King or Queen

Director of WOW

Or gather other fun people and brand yourselves as one of the following:

Joy Gang

Mirth Committee

Fun Committee

Cheer Committee

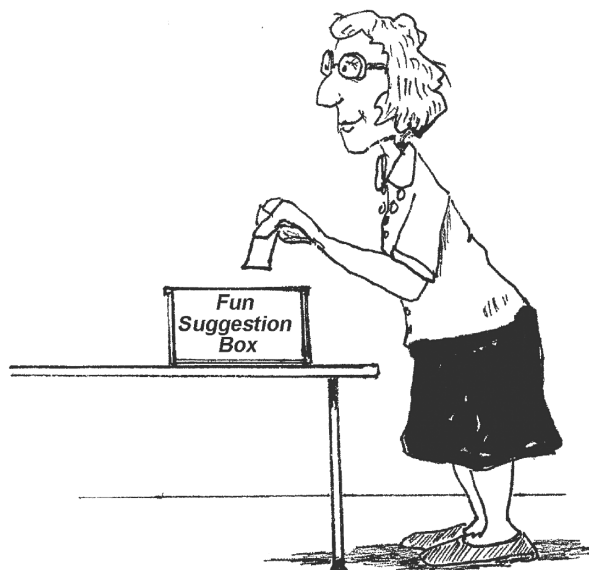
Happiness Group

Carol Kahler, principal of Gilbert Linkous Elementary School in Blacksburg, Virginia, has an in-house committee called “The Happy, Peppy Club.” This name came from the *I Love Lucy* show, where Lucy was the *Vitameatavegemin Girl* trying to sell a vitamin concoction to boost energy. “So why don't you join the thousands of happy peppy people and get a great big bottle of Vitameatavegemin tomorrow,” she said in her sales pitch. Kahler says her group “helps with door prizes, seating assignments at meetings to have staff members sit with new colleagues, icebreakers, etc.”



If you aren't a fun person, you can contribute to a fun work environment just by letting others implement fun activities. Schedule the first Fun Committee meeting, elect a chairperson, and let the group put together the yearly plan.

How do staff members like to have fun? Ask them. Make a *Fun Suggestion Box*, where they can contribute ideas for activities. On the suggestion form, ask if the person is willing to organize the activity.



Get together outside of work too. Put the events on the calendar to ensure that they actually happen.

- Go to a comedy club
- Organize a beach party
- Go bowling
- Play miniature golf
- Go skiing
- Go to a movie
- Go to the gym



FUNdraISERS

Often, people ask, "How can we fund the recognition activities?" Many valued recognition activities, such as giving personal words of praise and writing thank-you notes, don't cost anything, but others do. I am a firm believer that it should not cost workers money to do their jobs. I am always amazed at how much of their own money educators spend



on school-related activities. It took me a while, but I learned that if you want something, you should ask for it. Develop your recognition plan and estimate how much each event will cost. You probably won't have much district money to work with, so ask local businesses, community organizations, and parent groups to sponsor the events. Sometimes you may feel like you are begging when you ask for contributions. I spoke at a conference where they had a large number of door prizes that had been donated by area businesses. The chairperson of the committee said that she called the manager of a local chocolate production site. She asked if he would donate chocolate as a prize. After school, she drove to the factory, located the manager, and he gave her chocolate—one bar! Be sure that when you ask for donations, you give the company an idea of what you would like. Here are some suggestions:

- Box of chocolate
- Supply of postage stamps
- Dry cleaning coupon
- Savings bond
- Software to use at home
- House cleaning service for a day
- Car wash coupons
- Free income tax preparation
- Free tutoring for your child
- Dozen cookies
- Massage coupon
- Pedicure coupon
- Haircut coupon
- Manicure coupon
- Tickets to a sporting event
- Free session with a financial planner
- Weekend hotel certificate
- Free pair of shoes
- Movie passes
- Grooming for your pet
- Automobile detailing
- Free book at a local bookstore
- Dental whitening from a dentist
- Professional development activity
- Garden supplies
- Beach towels and suntan lotion
- Eyeglass frames
- Holiday dinner in a basket



Sponsorships can take the form of a monetary donation, or the sponsor can plan and implement the event. Be sure to give the



organizations plenty of recognition for the activities they contribute to—and remember to invite them to the events they’re sponsoring. I spoke at a wonderful opening day staff breakfast event for a district in which over a thousand staff members attended. The event was totally funded by a local financial institution.

It is sometimes harder to get donations for fun activities, so you can conduct simple FUNdraisers among your staff or in your community. These are some of the easy things you can do to fund your fun or recognition events.

Campus FUNdraisers

Personal Business Day Raffle

Most professional contracts allow staff members to have a designated number of personal business days—days in which they can take care of things that need to be handled during the day. In an informal survey of my audiences, I ask the participants what is most important to them. The response is the same across the entire country—TIME!

On the first day of school, sell raffle tickets for staff members to win a personal business day. Sell tickets throughout the day, particularly during lunch. If you have more than one preservice day, then sell tickets each day. At the end of the day(s), select the winning ticket at an event where all staff members are present.

You could also do another raffle during the second semester, when a day off in the middle of winter might just raise a lot of money.

Help Has Arrived Lottery

Sell lottery tickets to staff members. Draw tickets to select the winner(s). The winner gets the superintendent or principal as an assistant for a half of a day.

Dress Down Days

Designate Dress Down Days on which staff members may wear jeans and casual dress rather than their professional attire. Staff members donate three dollars (or another designated amount) for a button or ribbon to wear explaining why they’re dressed differently that day.

Dessert Taste-Off

Ask staff members to prepare their favorite desserts during October for National Dessert Month. Make a display of all the entries and provide napkins, plates, and forks. Place a container behind each entry and



assign it a number (and list the type of dessert displayed so the containers aren't moved). Don't include information about the dessert's creator. Throughout the day or during lunch times, staff members can taste the desserts and vote for their favorite(s) by putting coins in the cans of the desserts they enjoyed the most.

If you have a large staff, plan two dessert days. Have the staff members with last names beginning with the letters A through K prepare desserts for the first event and those with last names beginning with the letters L through Z prepare desserts for the second dessert day. Staff members may prepare desserts for both days if they wish. (*Darlene Roll, Ohio High-Point Career Center, Bellefontaine, OH*) The winner gets a certificate or other dessert-related item, and the money in the cans goes into the recognition and fun fund.

Chili Cook-Off

Invite staff members to prepare their favorite versions of chili. Have staff members purchase tasting tickets and vote for their favorite recipes. Make the portion sizes large enough that they receive a full lunch. Do not identify the people who made each chili. The winners get a basket of hot sauces or another food-related prize.

You could have the voting occur as described in the Dessert Taste-Off and have several days of competition.

Bring One-Buy One Sale

Have a sale where staff members both provide an item to be sold and purchase an item from the sale. In theory, at the end of the day nothing will be left. If there are remaining items, donate them to charity.

If you want to expand this FUNdraising activity, make it a community-wide event. It can be hosted at the school or at a community center. You may charge an admission fee, which will add to the day's revenue.

Potluck Breakfasts and Lunches

Create themes for breakfast and lunch events throughout the year. Have volunteer staff members bring in food that reflects the themes. You can also ask local restaurants to donate food items for the events. Sell tickets to staff members for four dollars for breakfast and five dollars for lunch. Hold the breakfast events before school; for lunches, have the administrators cover lunch duty so teachers can eat together away from students and the cafeteria. "We always raised several hundred dollars from these events as well as teachers loved the time together. We did these FUNdraisers several times a year, and they were a huge hit!" (*Dana Carlton, Cobb County Schools, Marietta, GA*)



Basket Silent Auction

Ask staff members to make theme baskets. An example of a theme might be Movie Night. The basket could contain items such as a DVD, a video store gift certificate or card, popcorn, candy, soda, or a fleece blanket. Staff members can ask community businesses to donate some items to the basket. Other themes might include the following:



- Coffee Lovers—flavored coffees, coffee mug, biscotti, flavored stir sticks, and chocolate spoons
- Chocolate Lovers—lots of chocolate
- Chocolates of the World—an assortment of chocolates from countries around the world, such as Toblerone (Switzerland), Lindt (Europe), and Milka (Germany)
- Spa at Home—bath salts, spa music, lotion, scented candles, and a pedicure coupon
- Are We There Yet?—travel items such as games, snacks, maps, a flashlight, and aspirin
- Are We Having Fun Yet?—yo-yos, crossword puzzles, movie gift cards, deck of cards, and a board game
- Classroom in a Box—a box of school supplies, including markers, stickers, and tape
- Olé! Mexican Vacation—salsa, chips, margarita glasses, and suntan lotion
- Luck in a Basket—chocolate coins, lottery tickets, and so on
- Snack Attack—chips, granola bars, juice boxes, microwave popcorn, and fruit
- Sports Lover—*Sports Illustrated*, sporting event tickets, whistle, baseball cap, hand warmers, hot dog magnet, and bleacher seat cushions
- Holiday Basket—a basket appropriate for the nearest holiday, such as Valentine’s Day or Halloween
- Breakfast in Bed—coffee cup with a coffee and tea bag inside, bagels, fruit, a magazine, a vase with a rose, and a linen napkin
- Book Lover—paperback books, bookmarks, magnifying glasses, snacks, magazines, a book light, a bookstore gift card, and highlighters
- Car Wash—sponges, bucket, shammy cloth, car wash detergent, and gift certificates for a car wash



- Summertime—sunscreen, sunglasses, magazines, beach towel, beach ball, sand bucket and shovel, and drink holders



Place the baskets on display, and put out silent auction sheets so that staff members can bid on the baskets. The highest bidder at the end of the designated period gets to keep the basket. Note: Alcoholic beverages should not be included in the baskets. (*Dana Carlton, Cobb County Schools, Marietta, GA*)

You could also sell raffle tickets to staff members (and parents). Put containers by each of the baskets. Have staff members deposit tickets into the containers that are nearest to the baskets they want. Hold the drawings at the end of the day or week. Select a ticket from each container to determine the winner of each basket.

Festival of Wreaths

You could have another raffle with holiday wreaths. Businesses could make and donate the wreaths, individual classrooms could make them, or staff members could create them. One particularly clever one that I saw in a nursing home was made by elementary students. The theme was Peace on Earth, and it was decorated with puzzle pieces. Raffle off the wreaths to be enjoyed in community members' homes.

Fine for FUN!

Late for a staff meeting? Late getting your lesson plans in? Late with your grades? Determine a *lateness fine*. Each time someone is late, assess the fine. The money collected goes into the FUNdraising fund.

Keep it Positive

Designate Monday as *Positive Day*. Everything said that day has to be just that—positive. There is no complaining about the weather over the weekend, the sports team that lost, housecleaning and laundry, or anything else. Anyone who is caught saying anything negative is fined a designated amount.





Spare Change

Decorate receptacles, such as birdhouses, and place them near the vending machine and in cafeteria lines. Label them with *Spare Change Fund*. Have staff members donate their spare change to the recognition fund. Each month, post the total for the month's contributions.

Variation

During one week, put out a jar where staff members congregate. Ask everyone to contribute their change as donations. Collect a different denomination each day.

Monday—pennies

Tuesday—nickels

Wednesday—dimes

Thursday—quarters

Friday—paper bills

Staff Bingo

Coordinate with a local restaurant to have a staff bingo night. Often, the restaurant will provide complimentary appetizers. Have staff members purchase bingo cards for each game. The winners receive a portion of the proceeds and have the choice of keeping their winnings or donating them to the FUNdraising campaign. Of course, most donate! (*Dana Carlton, Cobb County Schools, Marietta, GA*) You could coordinate this with National Bingo month, which is December.

Holiday Shopping

Invite independent consultants or representatives of products and companies, such as Pampered Chef, Mary Kay, purse and shoe consultants, Tupperware, and so on, to show their products at an afterschool event. The sales representatives donate all or part of their commission to the FUNdraising event. This is especially successful



when held at the start of the holiday shopping season and again prior to Mother's Day. (*Dana Carlton, Cobb County Schools, Marietta, GA*)

Fuzzy Flip-Flops



Ask volunteers to crochet flip-flops with fuzzy yarn, and then sell them. You could start a new style trend! Save them for the spring and use them with the staff appreciation event found in Chapter 5 (Sensational Spring) titled “We Have Flipped Over Our Staff.”

Age Game

Hold a contest in which staff members guess the combined ages of the administrators. For each guess, staff members donate a designated amount of money toward the fun events. The winner is given a prize. If you have more than one person with the correct answer, put all the correct answers in a hat and draw one winner.

How Many?

You can incorporate this FUNdraiser a number of times during the year, especially during the holidays. Fill a jar with treats, such as candy kisses for Valentine's Day, candy corn at Halloween, or peppermint candy at Christmas. Have staff members donate an amount of money



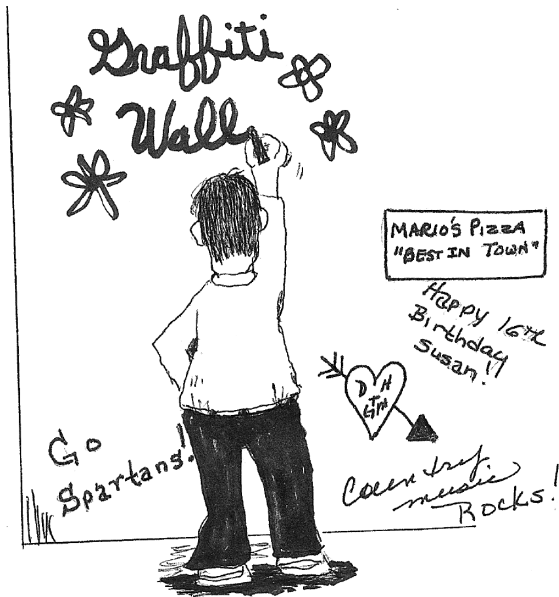
each time they submit a guess as to how many pieces of candy are in the jar. The person who guesses a number closest to the actual number of candies in the jar gets to keep the jar—and all of the candy!

Splitting the Take

Begin staff meetings with a 50/50 drawing, where people can buy a raffle ticket for one dollar. A duplicate-numbered ticket is put into a container. A ticket is drawn from the container, and the matching-ticket holder receives half of the money collected. The other half goes to the recognition and fun fund.

Staff Meeting Raffle

Raffle off products at staff meetings. Products may be samples donated by a sales representative, a gift from a business partner, or a certificate for a homemade delight prepared by the principal!



Community FUNdraisers

Rent a Graffiti Wall

Many people love to write and draw graffiti. Often, the motivator is not the destruction of property, but rather self-expression. Designate a wall (or walls) on the campus or in the community on which it is OK to express positive emotions. Rent the space for a designated length of time to people or companies to express their love, cheer on their team, make a marriage proposal, give congratulations, promote a product, or anything else that is positive.

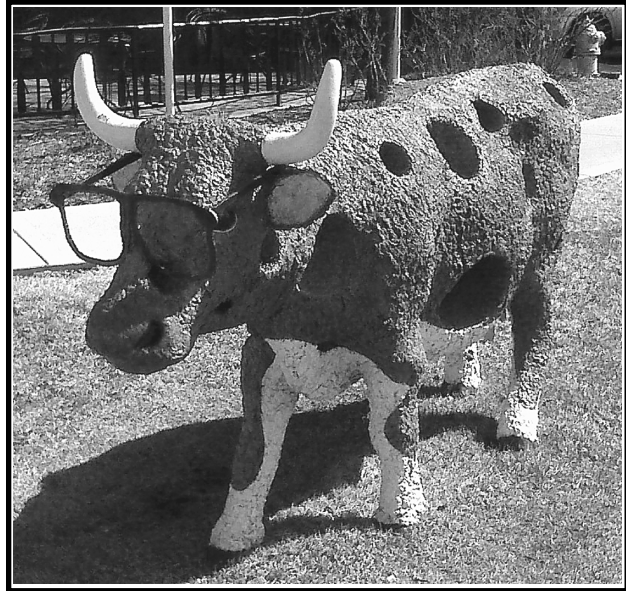
Parents Night Out

Plan one evening in which the staff provides child care at the school so the parents can have a night out. During the designated hours, serve dinner, show a movie, and have simple crafts for the children to work on. Charge the parents a fee for the evening. Be sure to have the parents provide their contact information. Let them know that if they are late in picking up their children, they will be charged extra. This event will be especially appreciated prior to the winter holidays.



Chair-ity Auction

You have probably seen the fabulous cows in Chicago that were uniquely decorated, displayed throughout the city, and ultimately auctioned off for charity. Other cities capitalized on this theme and decorated pigs and other items that were unique to their communities. In the same vein, have a *chair-ity* auction. Enlist businesses and community members to buy a chair and decorate it. If your community has a real estate showcase where members of the public view model homes that are decorated by local interior design firms, include the chairs in the staging of the homes. After the home tour, auction the chairs. The chairs can also be displayed in the windows of retail establishments, in the schools, and so on.



IN CLOSING

Creating a fun, rewarding school climate is everyone's responsibility—we all need to give to others and have fun together. We cannot help but thrive when we are surrounded by motivated, enthusiastic, positive colleagues. Use the ideas in this book to keep you and your coworkers enthusiastic and growing. *Drive your colleagues HAPPY!*

