

ANGLING FOR BUCKS



JOHN MANIACI - State Journal

Lincoln Elementary fifth-grader Rae Page, 10, pedals a stationary bicycle to light up a row of light bulbs as classmates, from left, Isabelle Tigges-Green, Dylan Klingner and Destiny Crowder look on. Lincoln students are selling compact fluorescent bulbs to raise energy awareness and money for their school.

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Science students at Lincoln Elementary are eager to share their lessons about energy. Along the way, they'd like to sell light bulbs.

"They help save energy and they light up just as well as the normal light bulbs. And you don't have to pay so much on your bills," said Selina Armenta, 10, a fifth-grader.

She and her classmates began selling compact fluorescent light bulbs last week to raise money for their school. Last year, they netted about \$3,000, science teacher Clare Seguin said.

Dane County schools and parent-teacher organizations turn away from traditional fundraising items and methods

"It's really neat because kids learn a lot about energy conservation," she said.

In the perennial fundraising scramble, financially strapped schools and parent-teacher organizations are turning away from traditional sale items such as wrapping paper and candy.

Instead, more fundraisers are aiming for both education and profitability. For example, more

than a dozen Dane County schools are marketing fair-trade organic coffee, personalized with school labels, and teaching children about coffee growers.

Others are turning to minimum-hassle ways for a family's routine shopping to help their school.

Falk's PTO raises money through food and T-shirt sales and the annual spring carnival, set for April 14. Another popular fund-

raiser at Falk lets children buy raffle tickets - 25 cents apiece or 5 for \$1 - to have lunch with a favorite teacher.

It raised only about \$100, "but the kids absolutely loved it" and learned that they can help with expenses such as field trips, Woodruff said.

Busy parents also are organizing silent auctions, raffles, rummage sales and festivals to scrape up income.

"People hate hitting up their neighbors and their colleagues," said Jackie Woodruff, PTO copresident at Falk Elementary.

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Fundraisers

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"People really want to get away from that door-to-door thing."

Some organizations also have found that direct appeals are effective; families give what they can but don't feel pressured.

"I've even gotten envelopes with quarters in them," said Lisa Cutting, vice president in charge of fundraising for the Midvale-Lincoln PTA, which received \$3,447 in cash donations last year.

Free-trade coffee

Coffee sales were the brainchild of Lori Matthews, a Lowell Elementary parent. Now she's the fundraising coordinator for Just Coffee, 1129 E. Wilson St., and she's selling hundreds of pounds of fair-trade organic beans each month to parents under such labels as Lowell Lizard Roast and Tiger Brew from the Van Hise Tigers.

"More and more parents

have the nerve to say, 'I want to support my school but I don't want to buy 15 pounds of cookie dough to do it,'" Matthews said.

Children take order forms home and parent volunteers arrange coffee distribution so "the kids don't have to sell anything," Matthews said. Parents pay \$10 per pound; the school gets \$3.50.

There's an educational component, too: Coffee-growers from Guatemala and Ethiopia visited Madison classrooms to answer questions about their countries and their crops.

At Emerson Elementary, coffee sales "have been good for everybody" and helpful to fundraising efforts where every little bit helps, said Wendy Sauve, PTO co-chair.

"We kind of have to nickel and dime it," Sauve said.

The Midvale-Lincoln PTA raised nearly \$3,300 last year with its rummage sale and hopes for similar success at this year's March 24 sale.

At Spring Harbor Middle School, the annual Springathon, scheduled for May 18 this

year, is a popular fundraiser that brought in about \$7,000 last year. Combined with other efforts, including a direct donation campaign, Spring Harbor fundraising is trying to hit the \$50,000 mark for an endowment through the Foundation for Madison's Public Schools.

Food and gasoline

Spring Harbor, like about 50 other schools in Dane County, raises money from merchandise cards through a Middleton company called Simplified Scrip. Families buy cards for grocery stores or other merchandisers, and a percentage of their purchases goes to the school.

"It's really a nice program, and it's painless," said Gail Conder, co-chair of the PTSO at Spring Harbor.

Older students still sell things; magazines are popular in middle schools and high schools. At Monona Grove High School, enterprising young marketers have created a board game called Mononopoly that combines learning

with fundraising.

"It gives them the opportunity to apply the skills of networking and creating that relationship with a customer," said Josh Fassl, the marketing instructor.

Patterning the game after Monopoly, students substituted local landmarks such as Monona State Bank and Slinde Realty Company and asked businesses to purchase spaces. Then members of DECA, an association of marketing students, sold games for \$20 each to raise money for travel expenses.

At Lincoln, children sold 1,568 compact fluorescent light bulbs last year. Their school is participating in the Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program at UW-Stevens Point.

To persuade their friends and relatives to buy a \$3 light bulb, the children must be able to explain how it saves energy.

"They say the best way to learn something is to teach other people about it," Seguin said. "They learn a lot. It's pretty remarkable what they retain."