

FUNDRAISING MADE FUN

We may not be the biggest fundraiser in Houston, but we are the most FUN! For the last two years the French National Honor Society at Westchester Academy sponsored the Westchester International Dog Show. This unique event was time consuming, but the benefits were well worth the effort.

The first item of business was selecting a date, time, place, and getting principal approvals. For our students, 10:00 am was not too early for a weekend or for students coming to set up and prepare for the show, which lasted a little over two hours. Normally, October is a relatively dry month as the temperature falls at least below 90. We reserved the baseball field and, just in case, the covered basketball court, should the weather not cooperate. We have been lucky both years, with absolutely perfect skies, the kind that make everyone want to get outside.

The next task was using student creativity to determine categories that bring smiles, if not laughter. As this was not a "serious" show, we provided something for all. We began with geography to reinforce social studies and make everyone aware of the animal differences caused by habitat. The classifications were very loose by continent and included a miscellaneous, for dogs of unknown heritage. This year, Eastern Europe was especially well represented with three Pomeranians. Germany had a number of shepherds and some dachshunds.

Intelligence and training was another category with numerous selections for owners to make. The race to find the fastest was one of the best parts of the show. There were also competitions for friendliest and best in retrieving, Frisbee catching, and dancing. The most original trick/talent was a dog who would sneeze on command. Grooming and appearance were also important, so we included best dressed, looks most like owner, best Halloween outfit, and most patriotic attire. One student and his dachshund, who both dressed in red baseball shirts and caps, won.

We also had a classification for "Texas Sized Dogs," including the tallest on two legs, on four legs, the fluffiest, and the biggest smile. This was at third base while "Little Treasures" competed in similar categories at first base. Contestants entered as many or few categories as they wanted. Registration was a \$5 donation for each event that includes one entry for the handler. Three events were \$10 and seven were \$20. On site registration was \$5 per event and \$2 for each spectator.

Publicity went in every direction the stu-

dents could imagine. Students sold tickets everyday at lunch for two weeks prior to the show, put signs out around the school and in neighborhoods as allowed, and left announcements at veterinary practices and pet shops in the area.

To make the show more inclusive, we asked the German National Honor Society at our school and Spring Branch Middle School German students to join us. They sold refreshments and had a small garage sale. Another French National Honor Society from Spring Woods High School also participated with the show's first "dog wash." Their students used technology to produce some fabulous publicity that really promoted the entire show. Finally, Westchester Art Club took photos and did sketches for a small donation. Each of these organizations made enough money to ensure their participation next year.

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