

Palmer Rapids Public School engages community



Mitchell Hartwick and Joseph Yuke enjoy refreshments and a chance to win prizes at the public school Walk-A-Thon on Saturday in Palmer Rapids. Photo by Sarah Vance

By Sarah Vance

Palmer Rapids Public School students, who have been collecting pledges for several months in anticipation of the first annual Panthers Walk-A-Thon, saw these efforts pay off last Saturday, as the event exceeded fundraising expectations.

"We set a fundraising goal of \$3,500 for today," said Tanya MacGregor, a member of school council. But the council reported a profit of over \$5,000, even before the fundraising barbecue began at noon.

The weather could not have been better for the Walk-A-Thon that kicked off at the school parking lot. Their first responders, including OPP, Fire Services and Paramedics, provided guided tours of parked emergency-response vehicles before setting off on the 6.4 km trek, on foot, with local children.

Participants were given a map of the route, which took families along Palmer Road before looping back to the school via River Bend Drive. The route was marked with pylons as well as police cruisers and fire trucks with flashing lights, which delighted the children. Games were also dispersed along the checkpoints, such as a chicken-throw challenge where students tossed toys to knock over bowling pins. This added excitement, as stamps were awarded for the chance to win prizes after the walk.

"I am walking today for Palmer Rapids Public School," proudly declared Joseph Yuke, a senior-kindergarten student who can write his own name. He put in an estimate of 50 chocolate toonies in the True North Credit Union Coin-Guess contest.

Many volunteers, from teachers to parents and businesses as well as members of the Lions Club, helped run the barbecue and the various check-point challenges. Fresh cut oranges and chilled bottles of water were available during the walk to replenish participants, the youngest of whom were strolled in carriages or cradled-in-arm, arriving with groups of parents and grandparents for the intergenerational event.

"This is our first year doing a walkathon. The school council parent group agreed last year that we would give it a shot," said MacGregor, who spearheaded the Walk-A-Thon. "We were in good fiscal shape at the end of last year, so decided this could be a year to try something new."

All of the proceeds from Saturday's event will be allocated to supplementing the cost of out-of-school excursions. "The year-end trips are greatly anticipated by all the students," said MacGregor, explaining that students in grades four to eight will be traveling to Kingston, while primary students are busy preparing for an outdoor adventure in Algonquin Park.

Palmer Rapids Public School relies upon community support in order to supplement the costs of out-of-school excursions. For those seeking to make a donation, amounts greater than twenty-five dollars are eligible for a tax receipt.

?We have had a wonderful turnout from the teachers and administration of the school,? added MacGregor. ?Our parent council membership sometimes fluctuates from year to year. But the ongoing commitment and support for our projects is always amazing.?