

Casey PTA's All Star Champs: A Best Practice Example for Dads *and* Family Engagement

Presented by Casey Elementary PTA in Austin, Texas

It all started as a conversation among incoming PTA board members at Bertha Casey Elementary School. We wanted to continue the "Donuts for Dads" tradition of honoring dads while making it a healthier event that included everyone who may be a father figure: grandpas, uncles, neighbors, step-dads, and the moms who are also sometimes a "dad". All of these persons may be an All Star in a child's life, so we called the event "All Star Champs."



Sheriff (& Casey Grandfather) Pete Vargas with Chief of Police Art Acevedo

Previous attempts to reserve the Austin Police Department helicopter were unsuccessful for our carnival dates, so on a whim we emailed the department again to ask if they could land at the All Star Champs event in April. The department said, "Yes"! Next we emailed APD's Chief of Police and explained the event and how it was honoring dads – and invited him to join us. He said, "Yes"! We then emailed our local Chick-fil-A restaurant to ask if their old-fashioned fire truck could pay us a visit on this night, and they answered, "Yes"! Lastly, we emailed our local sheriff's office to ask if someone from there could join us as well, and were not only told "yes" they would come, but imagine our surprise to learn that the

sheriff who would visit us was also a Casey grandfather! Lastly a local business called SoccerZone offered to demonstrate soccer moves by their students (also Casey students).

Invitation flyers were sent home with all kids and staff. We scheduled the event from 6:00 to 7:30 PM with free hot dogs, nachos, drinks, and brownies made by PTA members. PTA members gathered to make All Star Signs that were posted throughout the cafeteria to honor the helicopter crew, the Chief of Police, Travis County Sheriff, SoccerZone and Chick-Fil-A.



Families began arriving at 5:45 PM...we had lots of excited crocodiles! The helicopter began circling over the school at 6:05 while pilot Ryan Miller and Sergeant Fuentes



took their time to land on Casey's track field giving all crocodiles an awesome show. Once the blades completely stopped moving, all crocodiles were able to climb on board the helicopter and take photos with the crew and the helicopter. Around that time, Chief Acevedo strutted his way through an amazed crowd of dads, moms, and children who all greeted the Chief with wide smiles, warm handshakes and plenty of photo requests. Casey Crocodiles

showed their love for Chief Art Acevedo. The Chick-Fil-A Fire Truck arrived with its siren blaring and quickly set up to giveaway tons of coupons for free kids' meals and other items.

Families spent their time between the helicopter, greeting the Chief, climbing the fire truck, watching the SoccerZone demonstration, shaking hands with Sheriff Pete Vargas, or playing a variety of All Star Games like football toss, soccer kicks, baseball throws, and basketball hoops. We estimate that a total of 400 people + attended this event and we ran out of every single food item! This event cost our PTA about \$300 for the games & food and another month of planning time to get it all organized. Every dad or father figure in attendance was given a lanyard with a name tag that held sports stickers. All it took to coordinate this event was a little patience in securing the helicopter, an internet search to find emails for everyone, and just a handful of follow-up emails to ensure that everything went as planned.

This was the first time in the history of our school that a helicopter landed there, that the Chief of Police visited, that a sheriff visited (in uniform), that SoccerZone demonstrated their skills to us, and that the Chick-Fil-A fire truck visited. Needless to say, it was an amazing fun-filled family friendly event that plenty of crocodiles enjoyed and talked about for many days afterwards! Casey PTA was especially happy to watch as families enjoyed the evening and the activities together!



Submitted by Casey PTA Board – 2010/2011 School Year
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