

Motion Commotion Truck Fair

*Ruth Livingston Elementary School
Pasco, Washington*

Kindergartners huddled in the scoop of a front end loader. Squeals and laughter rang from second graders in the cab of a fire truck, as they sounded the siren. The school principal and superintendent shared the bucket of a utility truck parked high above the playground. Such were the sights and sounds at this year's Motion Commotion Truck Fair.

Ruth Livingston Elementary School takes great pride in its truck fair – a school production that cannot happen without community support.

Held every other year on a fall school day, the event involves dozens of “things that go.” The motion-machines are assembled on the schoolyard for a rare sort of career fair. Hundreds of people plan for months to make the fair successful and exciting. This year at least 98 local businesses and community members displayed commercial and recreational vehicles.

On the morning of the “vehicle carnival,” excitement accelerates as a dump truck, police car, library bookmobile, deluxe motor home and limousines idle outside the school, waiting to pull onto the playground. Parents direct traffic to ensure that everyone arrives safely.

The exhibitors get a warm welcome in the school library, designated as the Hospitality Room, where they can enjoy hot coffee and fresh baked crumb cake. During the school day, students meet the various participants and explore the rolling exhibits. Teachers gear their reading, writing and mathematics assignments to the fair.

The students are eager to see it all, says one organizer. The drivers and vehicle owners talk to the students about their businesses and what they do during a work day. Teachers say it is inspiring to hear fifth graders asking what kind of education is necessary for careers in television broadcasting or automotive sales.

Each year Motion Commotion has student participants, as well. The youngsters are

always thrilled to see a classmate show off his or her dirt bike and riding gear, four-wheeler or baby calf in the stock trailer.

By celebrating different occupations and recreational activities that use vehicles, Motion Commotion supports Pasco School District's Career Pathways Program, designed to help high school students select a career goal before graduation. The school believes that exposing students to various businesses, services and occupations in the elementary grades makes students more aware of career choices before the high school Pathways Program.

In addition, the event supports school improvement goals by connecting the community and school with various occupations and careers across the curriculum in a fun way. Many of the exhibitors bring stickers, pencils, penlights, Frisbees or other small advertisements to share with students.

Ten teachers made up this year's planning team. In the fall, the Motion Commotion Team of volunteer staff members and parents began meeting. They planned everything from initial contacts and school grounds preparation to hospitality and participation certificates. Each year more staff, parents and community members agree to participate. The Action Team for Partnerships helps foot the \$200 bill.

After a morning of hands-on learning, students invite the exhibitors to stay for lunch in the cafeteria. At the end of the day, it is common to see students outside lining the building as the vehicles roll off the playground and into the street. Horns are honking, lights are flashing, sirens are screaming and students are waving and shouting goodbye and thank you! They're probably also saying, “Come again!”

*Maria G. Lee and Gloria Gale,
Teachers
(509) 546—2688
Mlee@psd1.org; Ggale@psd1.org*