



Springton Lake Middle School In the Middle of Fair Trade

In our continuing coverage of Fair Trade Schools in the Mid-Atlantic region, we recently spoke with Libby Tusler, the Fair Trade champion who, together with three other school moms, helped **Springton Lake Middle School** in Media, Pennsylvania, become **America's First Trade Middle School** last June. Involved previously in Fair Trade initiatives at **Media Elementary School** during her daughter's primary school years and aware that the district's high school, **Penncrest**, had achieved Fair Trade designation, she was motivated to see SLMS "bridge the gap" and embrace support for Fair Trade when her daughter started sixth grade there.

Navigating the process in a school four times the size of Media Elementary was not without its challenges, however. Entirely self-funded, the parent-driven effort found creative ways to achieve the necessary goals for designation. They arranged for organic **Fair Trade sugar** to be used in Home Ec classes and **Fair Trade lip balms** to be sold in the school store. They prepared **Fair Trade bananas dipped in Fair Trade chocolate** as a healthy alternative treat at the year's first dance, educating snackers about the merits of Fair Trade as they took a break from dancing. They placed Fair Trade products and information in the teachers' lounge to encourage faculty to incorporate Fair Trade into classroom instruction, and supported interested faculty with video links and chocolate samples for lessons.

In the lead up to the year's final Fair Trade event, a celebration of the school's designation, the team arranged to have **Fair Trade facts broadcast school-wide** during morning announcements. Subsequently, at the celebration, students who could answer at least three of ten questions associated with the facts had their names entered into a drawing for twenty fancy Fair Trade prizes, among them items acquired at Ten Thousand Villages, as well as products donated by Fair Trade USA and Fair Trade Campaigns.

Says Libby, **"Teaching kids that they can make a difference in developing communities is important in bringing about change, and that's what motivates us."** She and her team are already thinking about goals for the upcoming school year, including acquiring additional Fair Trade advocates amongst SLMS' faculty and working to successfully "pass the torch" to parents of students within younger grades as her daughter makes the move to high school.

Actionable items from Springton Lake that you can put your own spin on:

- Contact Fair Trade certifiers to obtain free educational/promotional items (posters, stickers, pins, products) for events
- Provide Fair Trade snacks at school events and engage with the snackers about Fair Trade
- Make it easy for faculty to incorporate Fair Trade into their lessons by supplying collateral (video links, fact sheets, samples)

*This case study originally appeared in the June 2016 Mid Atlantic Bulletin. Interested in getting more news from the region? **Join our mailing list!***