**South Fayette Elementary School’s Family Reading Night 2015:**

**A Journey to Distant Lands**

Standards addressed:

* Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community—Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.
* Standard 2: Communicating effectively—Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

Family reading night has been a fixture in the elementary school for many years. This year, we plan to base the evening’s events around the notion that our students need and deserve to be exposed to cultures and ideas outside of their own. Towards that end, we have tentatively titled the night “A Journey to Distant Lands.”

All students and their families are invited to join the PTA on Family Reading Night, which will take place this school year on February 26th from 6:00-8:00 at our elementary school (grades K-2). Information about the evening will be posted on our brand new website (please check us out at southfayettepta.org….we’ve worked really hard this year at revamping the entire thing!), as well as through the weekly announcements that come home on Fridays. There is no cost for families to attend. We do encourage students to bring a book along to participate in our Book Swap…leave a book and take one that’s new to you.

All registered families will be placed into 6 groups prior to the start of the evening’s activities. Four stations will be specific to one of the countries we have chosen to focus on: Brazil, Australia, Egypt, and Greece. One station will be dedicated to teaching a dance lesson featuring a dance from one of the above named countries, and one station will feature food and drink from our four designated countries. Families will spend 20 minutes at each station before rotating to the next one. Each child will receive a “passport” that will be stamped upon entering each country. This will serve as a nice keepsake of the evening’s activities.

**STATIONS:**

Countries….each country will feature a book pertaining to that country read aloud by one of very own beloved elementary teachers! We are currently deciding which books to use (I have a list of potential ones if you’re wanting to peruse it), and students will be provided with a list of books that they could read on their own that pertain to each country, being sure to denote the reading level of the book so parents can make sure that their children are reading something appropriate to their reading ability. The room will be decorated with popular attractions from the country (like the Sphinx and Pyramids of Egypt). Each student will complete a craft during their visit to the country…a craft that has roots within the culture of that particular country.

Dance…at this point, we are in the process of contacting a few local dance schools to see if they could have someone come to the school and teach the Samba (from Brazil) to our families. We know the kids will certainly get a kick out of seeing their parents and friends learn some sweet new dance moves!

Food…we are hoping to partner with the Home Economics teachers at the High School and Middle School to see if they would be willing to help out on this end. In addition, we will ask for parental input as to food and beverages that would be appropriate for the evening. Members of the Family Book Night committee will coordinate to make sure that each country is represented in the food/drink station.

What we hope to accomplish:

In two words: A LOT! We want to continue to foster our children’s’ love of reading. We are providing for families an evening of bonding and memories at no cost to them. We want to crack open our children’s windows of perception and have them realize that there is so, so much going on in the world around them….through books and ethnic foods and dance, children will be exposed to a few of many different cultures in a fun and meaningful way. Recognizing and celebrating diversity is a huge benefit to our students, families, and schools as a whole. Family Reading Night provides an excellent conduit in which to do so.

Please contact me if you need any further information from me regarding our plans for the evening. Our PTA would be most appreciative of the grant money so that we can be sure to make the night’s activities meet our goals and are memorable, without having to worry about the cost.

Thank you so much for considering our event for the grant!

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