

Topic: Learning through Fund-raising

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Jamie Brace, a former DECA national officer, explains that her chapter's "Kiss a Pig" fund-raising project was motivational and fun, but that it was much more. As this column will explain, the project was not only an integral curricular learning experience, but it both enlarged and deepened the students' interaction with the business community beyond what a normal job placement would provide.

A member of the chapter's advisory committee recommended that the Rogers County Chapter of the American Diabetes Association enlist the DECA chapter to serve as their advertising agency for the "Kiss a Pig" event. (The name reflects the fact that the early insulin supply for diabetics was taken from pigs.)

The fund-raiser itself was an adult affair, as was the Swine Soiree that capped it off. The students, building on their classroom lessons in promotion, provided the public relations functions. Community figureheads chosen to be candidates for the kissing privilege (including the mayor and the fire chief) did the actual fund-raising themselves.

Following the first year marketing curriculum for promotion, the chapter members selected promotional media and handled all of the press, including writing press releases. The project appeared in the local paper more than 100 times and also received television coverage.

Businesspeople visited the class at least once a week where class members trained them on how to ask for donations and how to publicize their campaign events. Chapter members also created campaign paraphernalia, such as collection cans for donations, press packets, campaign buttons, posters and signage seen all over the community. If this seems like too much work for the advisor, be aware that Brace required that the students do the work themselves. If they had questions, they contacted the community functionaries they were working with.

As a result of the chapter's involvement, the county ADA raised more money from this event than in any previous year. But the educational payoff was also huge.

Says Brace, **teaming students with adults has multiple benefits.** The students learn better, meet deadlines better and have enhanced interaction with the business community. Where a job placement may only provide basic experiences like sales, this project allowed students to see all facets of a public relations career. They actually managed accounts, wrote copy, produced story boards—performed all the tasks of an ad agency. Teaming them up with real organizations gives students real experience, and may encourage them to enlarge their career choices. Thanks, Jamie, for explaining another dimension of DECA.