

By Barbara Clauss

Family and consumer sciences teachers agree—word-of-mouth is a great way to market the programs, as peers are very influential in students' selection of electives in family and consumer sciences (FACS) education. However, teachers do not rely solely on their students to influence enrollments in their programs. There are a variety of strategies that can promote programs effectively to the primary stakeholders in FACS: Families, Administrators, Community and Students.

and Families, can be the backdrop for a variety of FACS-sponsored activities in which family members participate and learn about programs.

Students in child development courses may provide babysitting services to enable more family members to be involved. Students from classes or the career and technical student organization, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), can serve supper during late afternoon and evening parent-teacher conferences.



sistently. FACS teachers can devise a statewide "elevator speech" that imparts the essence of their programs to those who need to be educated in a

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES MARKETING STRATEGIES



Families

Strategies geared toward families can be either marketing/recruiting events or curricular activities. Marketing/recruiting events may take the form of open houses, family movie or game nights at the school, or informational postcards sent to families of all students. National Family Week, organized by the Alliance for Children

Parents, siblings and extended family members can be brought into direct contact with FACS curriculum through the assignments students complete. Interviewing grandparents supports inter-generational relationships while sharing history in a personal manner. Job shadowing with a parent or custodian provides insight on employment responsibilities.

Creating a family tree to illustrate family members' jobs or careers sheds light on the variety and legacy of employment across generations. Caring for infant simulators at home affords many teachable moments in which both the students and the family members learn. Finally, teachers can celebrate their students' efforts by awarding honors certificates at end-of-the-school-year honors programs attended by families.

Administrators

Messages about the value of FACS programs must be conveyed to administrators concisely and con-

brief, high-impact manner.

PowerPoint presentations that appeal to the visual and auditory preferences of principals, guidance counselors, school superintendents and school board members can highlight curricular innovations and emphasize the funding benefits of CTE courses. Displaying a variety of projects, as well as engaging stakeholders in interactive presentations of FACS processes, allows students to advocate for continuation and expansion of FACS programs.

Community

Reaching the community means students and teachers must go beyond the confines of home and school to publicize and engender support for their programs. Service-learning projects not only teach students key course concepts in immediate and applicable ways, but invite the community to participate in the educational process as well.

For example, students in a housing

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and interior design class can collaborate with Habitat for Humanity and its recipient family to build a house and plan its furnishing. Student-generated bumper stickers, posters, bulletin boards, public service announcements, and Web sites with concise, high-impact messages can replace stereotypes with images of 21st century life and career education.

Students

With their strong influence on peers, students have many opportunities to

with photos of students engaged in the hands-on, minds-on activities of a variety of classes. Creating an FACS Web site with a link from the school's home page is another creative outlet and opportunity to enhance students' language skills.

Student-run quizzes and other games with prizes that advertise programs may be used during lunchtime, halftime at a sporting event, or at a school open house. Moreover, when students demonstrate skills at these events, they might hold drawings

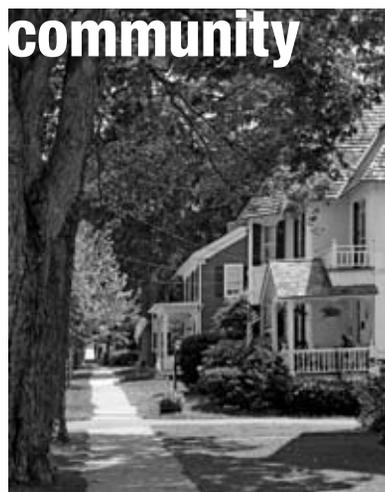


workshops is a great way to generate ideas for marketing our programs, as educators not only become re-ener-

INCREASING SUPPORT FOR AND PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES EDUCATION INCLUDES A NUMBER OF STRATEGIES TARGETING ALL OF THE PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS.

educate and recruit others. They may create a variety of media—flyers, brochures, school newspaper articles/advertisements, posters and the like—to distribute during passing periods and at lunchtime.

Bookmarks and goal cards can carry brief messages, such as “FACS—don't leave home without it!” Bulletin boards in hallways and around the cafeteria are great places for students to post “You Gotta See This” posters



for the products they create, such as fleece caps.

For those teachers and students with the resources to do so, a promotional video can be created and produced using themes with which students can identify. For example, an “Extreme Student Makeover” video dramatizing the positive changes in a student who completes an FACS course can appeal to middle school students on the threshold of making critical decisions for high school.

Ongoing Efforts

Increasing support for and participation in FACS is an exciting and challenging effort that teachers deal with on a continuous basis. Fortunately, there are many approaches to garnering support and involving stakeholders in FACS programs; several of the marketing and recruiting activities reach more than one stakeholder audience while simultaneously meeting curricular demands.

Participation in conferences and

gized, but also have the opportunity to network and share successful strategies. We are very fortunate in Indiana to have a tremendous network of FACS teachers. Our state curriculum specialist, Peggy Wild, and our FCCLA state adviser, Jen Staley, never cease to inspire us through the meaningful professional development opportunities they create.

The marketing ideas I have presented came from our November workshop, and I hope they will serve as starting points for other FACS educators to build upon in creating their own marketing efforts. We believe strongly in “our product,” and that is certainly a good place to start.

The skills that students in FACS education are learning are practical skills that will help them to succeed in life. But what makes FACS education even more valuable is that it will help students grow into better family members and better members of their communities. What could be a better selling point than that? **T**