

Fundraisers have definitely changed significantly

School fundraisers have been taken over by retired carnies. That's my theory and I'm sticking with it.

Over the last five years I've noticed an increased trend in school fundraisers. More emphasis is placed on the prizes children can win and less on the benefits of raising money for the good of the organization.

These fundraisers frustrate me. Not because the cause isn't worthy but because of what they teach my children.

I remember when fundraisers were handed out in class with few instructions from the teacher. That's not how it's done anymore. Now, a schoolwide assembly is held. Carnies stand up front touting the glistening



Guest column
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plastic prizes children can earn through selling products. The more products sold, the more plastic goodies children can accumulate.

The result is excited children who race home with visions of miniature air hockey tables dancing through their heads. As parents we get to crush our children's enthusiasm with a dose of reality.

The reality of selling 100 items

is not feasible: Mom's friends will buy from their own children, dad's office has only a handful of people (companies are cracking down on fundraisers littering the workplace anyway) and our relatives do not need 12 rolls of wrapping paper and eight dozen cookies each.

I want my children to learn hard work pays off. I want them to know that they are not to pass their responsibilities onto others.

Today's fundraisers teach them the opposite. For safety reasons, children are discouraged from going door-to-door. Instead, they are encouraged to hit up friends and family. After that, they are instructed to have Mom or Dad take the fundraiser packet to work for them. That teaches my

children they don't have to work hard, let Mom or Dad work hard, then take the credit and collect the prizes.

Encourage the students to ask their parents to walk door-to-door with them. Provide more opportunities to involve the children by having them pull stock for their orders and bag them. A parent volunteer, or two, can oversee this process, but let the children do the work.

The fundraiser carnies have created many levels of prizes: Parties for children who sell 10 or more items, plastic toys for each level reached, drawings for iPods or cash.

I want my children to know the true meaning of fundraising. I want my children to know it feels

good to help and that good feeling will last longer than a cheesy plastic toy.

I'd like to see fundraisers tout the benefits, not the prizes. Recognize top sellers with their names in the newsletter. Emphasize the benefits of raising money for a climbing wall in the gym and document cameras for the classrooms.

Teach my children to sell for the good of an organization, not for their own fulfillment. Teach them the pride in showing others what they've helped purchase for their school.

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