

Parent Palooza 2008 Increases Awareness



Chris supervised bowling at last year's Parent Palooza

What's a PALOOZA???

Without a doubt, our most frequently asked question last month was, "What's a Palooza, anyway?" It's hard to believe that I said we'd bring a booth to the event before I knew what a Palooza was myself. I guess that makes me gullible.

Take hundreds of families; add a desire to do something fun with their children; put in a healthy dose of beneficial information and host it at the ASU Convocation Center and you



Madison Roddy, a Senior at Brookland HS helps CFF reach the parents while other volunteers reach the children.

have a recipe for a Parent Palooza. NEA Parent magazine and a host of other sponsors held their second Palooza event this year on October 18.

I Couldn't Have Done It Without Help

When the call came to ask us to man a booth at this year's Palooza, I was skeptical because Chris had just moved away and this event wouldn't be convenient for our local volunteers at a very busy time of year.

Thankfully, the Pizza Night at Brookland Elementary was scheduled for September 25 and I was invited to speak for them again this year. I noticed how well the youth volunteers handled the children and even the men who came by the hundreds to this event. After the Pizza Night concluded, they stayed and helped clean up everything. When I approached one of them about helping at the Palooza, Madison Roddy said, "Sure; I love doing things like that." After a visit with a couple of Club Sponsors at the High School, I confirmed our presence and began preparing a fun activity we could offer the children. After sitting on the floor for 6 hours last year re-setting pins for the bowling game, I decided I wanted helpers and a less strenuous game. It was a good thing because we were moved to another part of the building — right across from a Bowling Alley's booth and they had a full sized game!

What's a PALOOZA???

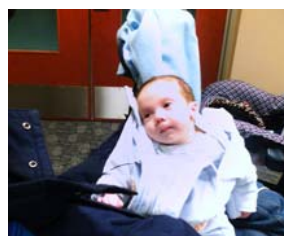
Our main interest was promoting Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University scheduled for January 6 (see front cover). Thanks to Madison's assertive manner, we got almost 100 adults to sign up for a free copy of Dave's revised edition of Financial Peace University. We gave away three copies to Ryan Wright, Melissa Pyle, and Nikcol Ruffin—all of Jonesboro.

Networking Works Too

Another benefit of such a booth is the networking that happens during the times when fewer parents are at the booth and you have time to speak to your neighbors in the booths nearby. We spoke with Kristi Pulliam of the Foundation of the Arts about a possible collaboration sometime next year and got reacquainted with someone from St. Bernard's we met three years ago when we were just beginning Boot Camp for New Dads.

You'll Never Believe Who Else???

After watching hundreds of families go by, the faces can begin to run together. One of them caught my attention. I wouldn't have recognized the little boy because I first saw him in a stroller with a respirator attached on a cold night in December of 2006. His father was so excited to get his turn to be the "experienced dad" at our Boot Camp for New Dads that



he loaded up that stroller and his little one in Lake City and drove to Jonesboro on a cold, rainy December night. Once he arrived, he had to spend about 10 minutes unwrapping the little package so I could get a picture. It's hard to believe this high-risk baby made it out to help other dads know what to do. He sure looks healthy now! Way to go, dad!



Center for Fathers & Families

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BETTER FATHERS,
BETTER FAMILIES**



Newspaper Ad to answer the most frequently asked question: "What do you guys do?"