Kids in Action

Example of Kids in Action

In a 6th grade Building Healthy Communities after-school group, students were challenged to find a way to make a positive difference in the health of their community. They had many ideas and talked about planting a community garden, raising money to support the New York Coalition for Healthy School Lunch, creating a free exercise video to distribute to communities members, and more.

They decided finally to hold a Community Fitness Challenge, in order to get community members exercising together and learning about health. They decided they would like to hold their event at the local YMCA.

Q: *In planning the project, what do you think students' first steps should be?*
A: First steps might include:
- Find name of person in charge
- Find YMCA's phone number
- Choose a date and time (with back-up dates)
- Make a list of questions to ask

Q: *What questions should the students ask?*
A: Possible questions might include:
- How many people will be able to come to the Fitness Challenge?
- Will we be able to borrow equipment from the Y, or will we need to bring our own?
- How long will we be able to stay?
- Are there any other rules I've forgotten to ask about?

Joey volunteered to call the director of the Y. He told her about the class and what they wanted to do, and then moved on to their list of questions. The director was excited about the Fitness Challenge! They agreed that May 10 from 3:30–5:30 would be a perfect time for the Challenge, that it could take place in the gymnasium using the equipment from the Y (like jump ropes, kick-balls, etc.), and that about 100 people would be able to attend. Joey thanked her and gave her the phone number of the school in case she needed to reach them. The students in Joey's class were excited that their project was going to happen! Now they needed to make a list of everything they would need.

Q: *What supplies will the students need for their party?*
A: **Some supplies might include:**
- Balloons
- Cups and water
- Fruit and other healthy snacks
- Information about Health for distribution
- Small prizes for kids
- Extra sports equipment, like basketballs, hula hoops, jump-ropes, etc.

The students did some research and shopping around to figure out how much money it would take to buy the supplies they needed. $275.00!! They needed to figure out where to get all these supplies—either through donations or by raising money to buy them. They were feeling a little nervous, since they knew $275.00 was a lot of money! So, they started doing some research on local businesses and organizations that might be willing to help. Using the local newspaper and phonebook, the class came up with a long list of possibilities, including:
- The Dollar Store
- Duane Reade
- Help for Kids
- Parent Teacher Association
- Target
- The Corner Store

A few students volunteered to write letters to these businesses, but as a class they decided there just wasn't time to wait for a reply! So, they spent time rehearsing what they would say to each business/organization and divided the list among the students. The kids worked in teams and made phone calls and visited the local businesses (with a leader or parent, of course!). They were able to gather all the supplies they needed. But, they still needed to get the food and small gifts. That meant finding a way to raise $100.00!

Q: *How can the students raise money for their supplies?*
A: **Students can brainstorm a list of ideas**

The students had another brainstorming session and decided that they would hold a healthy snack sale to raise money. Again the students paired up, and each pair found a way to bring in a healthy treat to sell—some asked their parents to help them make healthy smoothies, and other kids asked local grocery stores for small donations. They got permission to hold the bake sale during a Parent Teacher Association meeting and were able to raise $97.50. They were able to buy all of their supplies (with a little help from change they found!).

On May 10, the 6th grade Building Healthy Communities group ran a successful Community Fitness Challenge! Community members exercised together, learned about and enjoyed healthy snacks, and generally had a great time.

After the project, the class talked about their success and the challenges they had faced. Then, the class sent thank you letters to EVERYONE who helped, from local businesses to the Y Director to parents and teachers who had given time or money to the project.