

## **March Madness- Logan Township Middle School**

The name “March Madness” immediately brings to mind exciting basketball games, intense rivalries, and broken brackets- and this is exactly what Logan Township’s Student Council March Madness event signifies. For several weeks, our 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students are involved in forming teams, practicing their skills, designing t-shirts, and competing in one night of frenzied athleticism that culminates with the top student team squaring off against the staff team for the ultimate championship. Each participant contributes \$5 to play on a team, and spectators, who include other non-playing students and the community, donate \$3 each. All of the money raised from sales and snacks, which usually approximates \$1000, goes to the NJASC state charity. Due to the large amount of money raised and the great excitement and participation from our students and community, March Madness has easily become the most anticipated event of the year and is one that could easily be duplicated by other schools. Although this activity requires strong organization on the part of Student Council members and participation from a good number of teachers, the large charity donation it engenders coupled with the robust turnout of participants make March Madness worthy of a Top Ten Projects Award.

### **March Madness Project Description**

Several years ago, our Student Council president and huge basketball fan, brainstormed the idea for **March Madness**. **About three weeks** before the actual event, an announcement is made that all interested 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students need to begin forming teams of 5-7 players each. One person must complete a registration form listing the players and team name. After that, each student must turn in a permission slip and \$5. At this point, we have either seven or eight teams. All of this must be completed before seeding, which takes place after school one afternoon and is conducted by one of our P.E. teachers, who volunteers his time, although our Student Council advisors attend as well. During these brief, eight-minute, half-court games, teams compete against each other, keeping track of scores, which are then recorded by the P.E. teacher. Within a couple of days, he displays the seeding results on the Student Council bulletin board. Students may

then design t-shirts or plan their uniforms as desired. Meanwhile, Student Council members and advisors create our program for the big night and solicit teacher volunteers to keep score, run the scoreboard, DJ during breaks, and sell snacks and tickets. Two P.E. teachers referee the game, and staff members practice feverishly in order to not embarrass themselves during the championship game. Finally, when the night in March arrives, the event begins at 7 p.m. Students and community members (often parents and siblings of players or former students) pay their \$3 admission fee at the door. Snacks and drinks are sold throughout the night. To begin the evening, several students sing “The Star-Spangled Banner,” and then the first round of playoffs begins with the lower-ranked teams playing the higher-ranked ones, just as in the actual NCAA event. At halftime, with music blaring, students pay \$1 in order to be able to attempt two half-court shots, for which we award candy, snacks, or other small prizes. After that, the top two student teams compete for the championship with the ultimate game following, as the student champions face off against the staff team. Once the winner has been declared, we present the trophy to the winning team and photos are taken. Student Council replaces the wording on the trophy to reflect the new winner, and the trophy stays on display in the Student Council showcase.

Due to the large amount of money derived from this project and the enormous support received from students, staff, and the community, March Madness has been extremely successful. Of course, it would be expected that the students would be excited about such an event, **but the staff team spends time outside of school hours practicing, and parents and family members assist their children in making t-shirts and packing the school’s gym with spectators.** While we feel that we have developed a winning formula over the past few years, **we do plan to implement one change this year, which is to encourage staff members to donate \$5 to the state charity fund.** In this way, we will be able amass greater funds for donation and promote the charity’s message, as well.

