

# Fundraisers grab imagination and donations

Most people's eyes glaze and they put a protective hand on their wallet when they hear the word fundraiser.

But unusual fundraisers generate interest and, well, funds.

At Mount de Sales Academy, Catonsville, during Lent, the school rigs PVC pipe in two stairwells with containers to collect change at the bottom. One stairwell belongs to seniors and sophomores, the other to freshmen and juniors - but there's a twist. Pennies and nickels are "negatives" and are subtracted from each stairwell's total, prompting saboteurs to slip into the opposing stairwell with pockets full of pennies. Of course, the pennies and nickels are counted in the fundraiser's total, which topped \$4,000 last year; the money was used for outreach in Haiti, education in Africa and a school damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

At Notre Dame Preparatory School, Towson, one student from each class is selected to be the Penny Queen and for one week wears funny costumes and does everything from singing in the cafeteria to taking a whipped cream pie to the face to dancing in the hall.

Last year the four Penny Queens raised more than \$9,000, which provided scholarships in El Salvador. Each spring, 12 to 15 students travel to El Salvador to deliver the money.

Sometimes, it's the personalities that make the difference. At St. John School, Westminster, Principal Pat Brink always promises to do something whacky if the annual walkathon exceeds its goal. Last year, in front of the entire school, a hairdresser dyed her hair in multiple colors and styled it to look like a Troll doll.

Sometimes, an unusual item raises interest. At Holy Family Catholic Community, Middletown, watercolor artist Bob Hasle gave the founding pastor, Father John C. Moore, a watercolor of the church. Earlier this year, with Mr. Hasle's permission, the church had 400 prints made; sales have raised more than \$4,000 so far, with

proceeds going toward the mortgage on the new parish center.

A good scare always means a good take at St. Stephen, Bradshaw, which puts on the Haunted Woods of Kingsville each October. The event, which runs for two weekends, takes some 50 volunteers two weeks to put together. But in addition to being a community favorite - 600 people went through the first weekend - it also makes about \$6,000.

At the other end of the decorating spectrum, the Springhill Center for Family Development, housed in an 1850 home, does a decorator show house for the holidays; this year's will be Dec. 1-16. Tickets are \$20 at the door, \$15 in advance; last year's show house raised \$40,000 to benefit the center.

Dress makes the difference for some fundraisers; St. Mary's High School, Annapolis, began Sneaker Saturday in the 1980s, now just known as The Auction, a gala where people dress to the nines but wear sneakers. Comfortable footwear works - it raises more than \$200,000 each year.

For the ultimate in comfort, stay home in pajamas but "attend" the Stay at Home Ball. Just what its name implies, patrons donate the money they would have spent to attend a gala and "reserve" a place in prayer at Mass on Thanksgiving; the proceeds benefit projects of The Mother Lange Guild of the Oblate Sisters of Providence. The event, now in its 11th year, raises \$10,000 annually. Proceeds from this year's "event" will renovate the Mother Mary Lange Room of History at Mount Providence and the Mother Mary Lange Memorial Room at St. Frances Academy.