



STAFF PHOTO/TERESA LATCHFORD

Stuart Scott Public School student Julianna Kagawa bites into to one of her treats as fellow cupcake club members Jayla Babcock (from left), Sheridan Kerr, Katie Mariz, Jaidyn Lunn, Maia Schnalzer and Maddie Bell look on.

# Schools balk at using bake sales for fundraising

*New rules lead to schools searching for new fundraising ideas*

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When it comes to fundraising, many York Region schools are leaving the bake sale behind.

For decades, students, teachers and parents have relied on selling sweet treats to raise money for school initiatives, student field trips and equipment.

However, with the province mandating a new school menu this year that limits the fat, sugar and sodium that can be sold at schools, many elementary and high schools are searching for alternatives to the traditional sweet treat table to raise funds, York Region District School Board health and physical education curriculum consultant Char-

main Brown said.

Schools seem to be embracing the new policy, she said, adding some are holding non-bake bake sales to say they don't do bake sales anymore.

Stouffville's Summitview Public School stopped bake sales last year after a parent of a child with a nut allergy raised concerns over what was being sold, principal Jane MacPherson said.

"We couldn't absolutely be sure say there were no nut products in the things we were selling," she said.

Instead, the school opted to sell a variety of items to raise money.

These included poinsettias, pumpkins, gifts cards and gift cards with children's art on them.

"All little things that are timely throughout the year," Ms MacPherson said.

The school also held a winter fair and basket raffle.

Each classroom was given a bas-

ket theme and children brought in items to fill them.

"They seem to be received quite well," Ms MacPherson said.

Another Stouffville school, Glad Park Public School, still hosts cupcake sales four or five times a year.

"They're neat, ornate and very tasty cupcakes," principal Terry McElrea said.

The school's major fundraiser, however, is food sales.

Every other Friday, students can buy submarine sandwiches or whole grain pizza slices.

They have been doing this for a number of years, Mr. McElrea said.

The music department of Bayview Secondary School in Richmond Hill had to change its traditional fundraiser Java Jive and Pie because the administration reminded organizers that homemade pies from local farms and hot chocolate could no longer be sold as they didn't fit the healthy food choices.

The Dec. 1 performances and fundraiser went ahead, but with modified menu items.

The cafeteria service provided cupcakes to sell that conformed to the health food policy and decaffeinated tea was provided by Tim Hortons.

Despite the menu changes, the event was a sell-out.

Other schools still hold their sales, but are opting for healthier choices to ensure they comply with the policy.

Schools have 10 days to exempt themselves from the new menu rules to hold traditional events, Ms Brown said.

"We are finding a lot of schools aren't using the exemption days and are staying with the spirit of the policy," she said, adding most schools, especially elementary, are using the exemptions for cultural nights.

While making the transition from bake sales to other fundrais-

ers can be a challenge, she admitted most schools are tapping into their students' creativity and talents to come up with innovative ways to raise funds.

Many schools are getting the entire student body involved with danceathons, readathons and community car washes.

Others are charging for healthy lunch days, hosting silent auctions and selling magazines, gift wrapping and other specialty products.

At one school, students from grades 6, 7 and 8 were charging 25 cents for hair braids.

They would braid a small section of hair and put a bead at the end to raise money for a cause.

"This is just the first year this has been in play and schools are still working their way through it," she said.

"But I'm sure there will be more creative stories to come."

— With files from Sandra Bolan and Marney Beck

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