

Principal takes the cake

By Gail McCarthy
Staff Writer

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Rockport's elementary school principal has gone to a lot of measures to enhance the learning experience in the school, such as including every student's birthday as part of his daily announcements.

But Principal Shawn Maguire recently took his birthday spotlight to a new level: When he won a principal's challenge in a contest sponsored by Stop & Shop, he promised to turn himself into a human birthday cake.

Maguire's grant application was one of five chosen from more than 1,000, with the winners' schools each receiving \$1,000 as part of the supermarket chain's A+ Bonus Bucks program.

So yesterday, more than 400 students each had a chance to decorate the "human cake" with shaving cream, Silly String and confetti; ranging from small sparkling circles to long, curly paper string.

Parent volunteer and PTO member Tina Lamond constructed the cake box — into which Maguire was placed — out of a 3-ply cardboard box that once contained a bathtub.

Health teacher Linda Rowell, who served as master of ceremonies, called upon the "Peace Builders" from each class, chosen for their peace-building behavior among their peers, to place a large candle replica onto the cake. Each candle represented the wish each class had made to be pulled out of a hat.

The wishes varied from providing money to causes such as the Haitian relief fund and Heifer International as well as wishes for their classrooms, such as books or basketballs for the schoolchildren.

Judy O'Flynn's preschool class was the wish winner — it was awarded \$100 to create its wish for a "peace corner" with pillows and books.

But in the end, Maguire said that with the help of Stop & Shop, all the classroom wishes would be granted.

The idea for the cake grew out of Maguire's birthday announcements.

"I tried to come up with an idea that would be enjoyable and include all the students," he said in a post-cake decorating interview.

"The PTO moms were enthusiastic about it being chosen and I was thrilled," he said. "We met as a teaching staff and came up with some ideas and brought some of those ideas to fruition. Stop & Shop has been so gracious and outstanding in making this happen."

Fifth-grader Lauren Mason was among the first group of students to apply the shaving cream as frosting.

"It was so funny because we're making him look like a cake," she said.

Fourth-grader Richard Powers was all smiles. His buddy Eran Silva said he was thrilled at the opportunity "because that was the first time I got to spray the principal with something."

Second-grader Calvin Twombly said it was sort of fun.

Olivia Theriault, another second-grader, remembers that when she was in kindergarten some of the older students got to do an event with the principal and she had wanted to take part.

"This was really fun, because I wanted to do something like that time they got to wrap Mr. Maguire in toilet paper," she said.

Amy Murphy, a representative from the Stop & Shop corporate office in Quincy, gave the event a high mark.

"The principal and volunteers have done a great job pulling it together," she said. "It's fun to get kids involved in something outside of the box with a great cause behind it," she said. "It's interesting to see what principals are willing to do to help out their schools and students."

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Photos



Mary Muckenhoupt/Gloucester Daily Times Rockport Elementary School principal Shawn Maguire turns his face as second-graders spray him with Silly String in the school's gymnasium yesterday morning. Maguire won a principal's challenge in a contest sponsored by Stop & Shop, in which he promised to turn himself into a human birthday cake; the school would receive \$1,000 as part of the supermarket's A + Bonus Bucks program. Each student got a chance to help decorate the giant cake with such ingredients as shaving cream, confetti and giant candles. Staff Photographer



Mary Muckenhoupt/Gloucester Daily Times Kindergartners begin to giggle as they approach their principal to decorate him with confetti at the Rockport Elementary School gymnasium yesterday morning. Principal Shawn Maguire won a principal's challenge in a contest sponsored by Stop & Shop, in which he promised to turn himself into a human birthday cake for which the school would receive \$1,000 as part of the supermarket's A + Bonus Bucks program. Each student got a chance to help decorate the giant cake with such ingredients as shaving cream, silly string, confetti, and giant candles. Pictured here, from left is Eli Mueller, Damian Sorrenti, Catie Story and Sam MacDowell. Staff Photographer