



Calvin Christian School

South Holland, IL

Ryan Groen, Principal



Project Summary

Mission Driven Fundraising

Calvin currently has 230 students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Founded nearly 100 years ago by Dutch immigrants, the student population is now over 60% African-American. Greater diversity at Calvin has brought incredible blessings, but has resulted in less understanding of the way the school is funded. Mission Driven Fundraising as presented by Dr. David Hahn of Long Island Lutheran School helped us to integrate and communicate overall fundraising goals. The financial sustainability was formerly undertaken independently with little time spent communicating the overall school needs.

The goal of this project was to provide for the ongoing financial health of Calvin Christian School by directly relating financial needs to the mission and strategic objectives of the school.

This would be accomplished through the following strategies:

- Use of new vocabulary to describe areas of financial need that connected with the school's mission and strategic objectives.
- Compilation of needs and fundraisers into clear categories with specific dollar amount goals.
- Communication, communication, communication.
- We created a *Summary of Ministry Needs* that would, give parents and other potential donors a clear picture of operational, capital, and endowment needs for the current school year.

Project Results

The following steps were taken:

- A board retreat was conducted in September 2008 to discuss the concept and determine appropriate goals.
- The vocabulary of *Present Needs, Campus Needs, and Future Needs* was adopted along with the concept of a *Summary of Ministry Needs*.
- The concept of leadership giving was embraced and promoted.
- The *Summary of Ministry Needs* was published and utilized throughout the school year.



Fourth Grade Class after the Annual Walk-a-Thon

What We Have Learned

Successes

- Calvin's fundraising goals for the 2008-2009 school year were compiled, summarized, and communicated in a one page format.
- The board, administration, and development staff were unified on a common set of goals for fundraising.
- Fundraising goals were accurately communicated to faculty and staff.
- Nearly 100% of board, faculty, and staff participated in leadership giving.
- Constituents understood fundraising goals and increased levels of giving.

Challenges

- The project was undertaken in September 2008, near the beginning of the current economic downturn.
- The focus remained on *Present Needs* for most of the year, leaving the *Campus Needs* largely unmet.
- Although solicited, large gifts from foundations remained elusive.
- A consumer mindset of paying tuition and giving very little beyond tuition remained strong among some Calvin parents.

Conclusion

Calvin Christian School was blessed by the process of thinking more deeply about overall fundraising goals. This thinking has led to a variety of brainstorming on how to improve Calvin's funding model for long term sustainability. Calvin will definitely continue to utilize a *Summary of Ministry Needs* and will continue to benefit from what was learned in this project

