

Proven ideas from Jostens Renaissance



One of the most powerful aspects of Jostens Renaissance is the collection of great ideas that are shared by schools like yours. Here are a few of the best ideas of 2006 as submitted by Jostens Renaissance schools. For more ideas like this and a wealth of other Jostens Renaissance resources, contact your Jostens representative and visit Jostens.com/edserv

Blaze of Glory!

Submitted by: Melanie Lindsey

Blaze of Glory is an attempt to “cure senioritis”—in other words, stop our seniors from crashing and burning academically in their final year. It is not enough that the curriculum in both English and Social Science is rigorous; the seniors needed something else to keep them motivated in their final year.

Blaze of Glory is a subsection of our Jostens Renaissance program, but it is exclusively for seniors. Blaze of Glory celebrates homework completion, attendance and academic improvement at each quarter and sometimes in-between. There are a number of different incentives offered:

- **Dragon Hall of Fame—Most Improved:** The two students who make the biggest improvement in their GPA (from freshman to senior semester) and in standardized test scores are inducted into the Dragon Hall of Fame. Inductees receive a medallion at Senior Awards Night that sets them apart at graduation.
- **Senior Awards Night—**All seniors who increase their GPA by .5 or higher during their senior year are rewarded at Senior Awards Night with a badge of honor to be worn on their stole at graduation. Seniors who maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA through both semesters will also be recognized with a badge of honor to be worn on the stole at graduation.
- **Quarterly Celebrations—**Blaze of Glory holds a celebration for seniors who have improved their GPA by .5 or more from one quarter to the next. For many seniors, the 18 weeks from semester to semester is too long—they need a pat on the back at the 9-week mark and our Blaze of Glory Quarterly Celebration accomplishes just that.

- **Monthly Celebrations—**Blaze of Glory chooses a focus area each month and offers some kind of incentive. Some months are for attendance so that our seniors stay in school, others are celebrations of homework completion as we find that our students stop doing homework. The program molds to help with whatever issues we find, i.e., if students are ditching, we celebrate attendance; if students are failing, we celebrate achievement; if they are not completing homework, we reward homework completion. We constantly tailor the program to meet our current needs.

For more information, please contact:

*Melanie Lindsey
Foothill Technology High School
Ventura, CA
mlindsey@tusd.k12.ca.us*

Final Exam Cram!

Submitted by: Jennifer Sumulong

As part of our Renaissance program's support of academics on our campus, each semester prior to final exams, the Renaissance Leadership Class hosts a Cocoa Cram (January) and a Cola Cram (June). We have teachers volunteer to be tutors after school in a general area. We host the Cram for 4–5 days prior to finals. We publicize the event by placing posters and flyers around campus and listing what subject areas and teachers will be present on what day. Students attend the tutoring for one-on-one help and we give them free hot chocolate/cola simply for attending. The free beverage is an incentive to get the students there and gives the teachers a chance to help students prepare. What a great way to promote academic achievement on your campus, and it's very inexpensive!

For more information, contact:

*Jennifer Sumulong
Monrovia High School
Monrovia, CA
JGates@monrovia.k12.ca.us*



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Rolling out the Red Carpet!

Submitted by: Anne Charlebois

At Leo Hayes High, we are fairly new to the Jostens Renaissance scene, so we are building the program as we go along. Our kick-off event was a welcoming ceremony and it helped create a sense of unity within the student body as well as making the new students feel at ease with their first day of high school.

For the first day of school, the team leaders rounded up teachers and administrators and along with the help of our school mascot, formed a welcoming committee. Then we rolled out a red carpet so every student would feel like they arrived in style. As the busses pulled up, the students were shocked and amazed at what the first day of high school held for them! Each bus took its turn stopping at the red carpet and as the students walked up the red carpet and made their way to the front doors of the school, the student and faculty welcoming committee shouted words of encouragement, waved blue and white foam fingers, and showed just how much we value each individual member of the Leo Hayes community.

Ask most students what they remember of our Renaissance program and most will, no doubt, mention the day they arrived and were treated like stars. Our goal was to show that Leo Hayes High School can be a fun, happy place to attend and although this welcoming event may have seemed a little over the top, it was really well received. The welcoming event was originally going to be for the grade nine students only, but it worked so well that we ended up doing the exact same thing the next day when the rest of the students came! Of course, this was just one of the many things we have done within our school, but I think that it was one of the most valuable in terms of school atmosphere.

For more information, contact:

Anne Charlebois
Leo Hayes High School
Fredericton, NB
Canada
anne.charlebois@nbed.nb.ca

Thank You Day

Submitted by: Steve Bollar

One of the most important things at McGinley Elementary School in Willingboro, N.J., is to give thanks when it is deserved. Also, one of our academic goals for the year is to improve student writing. We decided to combine Renaissance and writing. The outcome was the creation of Thank You Day.

Thank You Day is the last Thursday of each month. On that day, every student and staff member in the school writes a thank you to someone else in the building. The letters can go to other students or staff. To keep the focus on writing, the students must use proper letter-writing technique. The grade level determines how much the student is to write. Some classes base their writing on a picture prompt. At the end of that Thursday, a small group of staff organize the Thank You letters. On Friday morning, I (the principal) deliver the letters to the classrooms for the students and staff. You should see the excitement in the students' eyes as they get letters. It is even a better pick-me-up for the staff. You never know how thankful people are for the little things you do.

As the principal, each month on Thank You Day, I give a heartfelt thank you to several staff members. I present the thank you in front of their class or group. The staff member is extremely happy and posts the thank you in their room.

Thank You Day improves the writing skill of the students, provides recognition to those who deserve it, and best of all, it costs nothing!

For More Information Contact:

Steve Bollar
Memorial Upper Elementary School
Willingboro, NJ
Sbollar@wboe.net

