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Principal at Pembroke Pines school covered in slime as part of fundraising effort



Panther Run Elementary School Principal Elaine Saef is covered in slime by teacher Ondina Lim after students met her fundraising goal of selling more than 2,000 items from a catalog. (Staff photo by Janeris Marte)

By Chris Guanche, Forum Publishing Group
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Anyone saying Elaine Saef is slimy wasn't exaggerating — at least for one day.

The principal of Panther Run Elementary School in [Pembroke Pines](#) was covered with slime as the cap off to a school-wide fundraising effort. With public school funding drying up across the state, schools like Panther Run have turned to fundraisers to bring in money for field trips, music programs and computer equipment, Saef said.

But in the current economy, fundraising has been difficult, so Saef decided to try something unconventional.

"I wanted to try something crazy and get the kids motivated," Saef said.

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The goal was to have students sell a combined 2,000 items from a sales catalog. Saef offered herself up as incentive, stating that she would be covered with slime if students met their goal. The reaction to the idea was instant.

"Ever since the announcement in September, it's all I've heard [from students]," Saef said.

The gambit worked, as students sold more than 2,500 items during the fundraising period. At the start of school on Monday morning, Saef kept her promise. With the entire school gathered inside the cafeteria, individual winners and the top class were awarded prizes.

Fourth-grader Shane Herrera, 9, won the award for top individual seller and was given a Dell Nickelodeon Mini Inspiron laptop computer. Shane's mother, Barbara Herrera, helped by enlisting family members to buy items from the catalog. She said Shane ended up selling nearly 100 items, and winning the laptop came as a surprise to him.

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"When he won [the laptop], his mouth dropped," Herrera said.

Once the prizes were handed out, the audience cried out, "Slime her!" Saef first emerged in a raincoat and goggles but said that might be considered cheating and switched to a garbage bag and umbrella hat. She also removed those and stood inside a small plastic pool to receive the slime. As part of the contest, the teacher from the class that sold the most items got to dump the slime on Saef. That honor went to fourth-grade teacher Ondina Lim.

"The students were very excited this morning," Lim said.

Lim poured the cold slime out of a bucket. As students cheered, she filled up the bucket with leftover slime from a jar and performed a second round of sliming. Saef said the slime, a mixture of gelatin, finger paint and water, was very cold.

Saef said the event has earned her the nickname "Slimer" with students. Being covered with slime isn't the only initiative Saef has come up with to increase school participation. She cut a deal with students to increase reading at home. If every student read for at least 15 minutes nightly for three weeks, totaling 300,000 minutes for the whole school, she would kiss a horse.

Saef said students handily met that goal, and many read for at least 30 minutes a night to make sure they'd reach it. Details are being worked out to bring a horse to the school's field. Kissing a horse would kill two birds with one stone: rewarding students for meeting their goal, as well as helping Saef get over a fear of [horses](#).

Although the sliming was cold and wet, Saef said it was worthwhile.

"It's one of the most fun things I've done in education," she said.

Chris Guanache can be reached at cguanache@tribune.com.