

Blackrock kids earn laugh at adults expense

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COVENTRY — If there is one thing you should know about Blackrock Elementary school, it is that they are a community passionate about raising charitable donations for good causes. And if there's a second thing, it's that they know how to celebrate a successful fundraiser.

On Tuesday morning, students and faculty gathered in the school gymnasium to see the reward for

their effort. The school raised over \$2,300 for the third annual Pennies for Patients program, which benefits the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The goal was to raise \$2,000 for kids suffering from blood cancers, and if they met that goal, the students would be able to vote for "prizes." Since they went above and beyond their fundraising goal, they voted from a list of choices that ultimately put the principal and other faculty members in embarrassing situations. The winning suggestions were for Principal Alicia Castle to sing Taylor Swift's "Love Story" in

front of the whole school, and for Behavior Specialist Debra Pelletier to receive a makeover from some students, an idea suggested by student Linda Cowen.

The entire school filed into the gymnasium on Tuesday morning and the excitement was palpable. Students were anxious to see the show, but first, Castle spoke to them.

"What you did was truly remarkable," she said in her address to the school.

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Students get fundraiser reward

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Pelletier went first, covered in a plastic smock. Four female students, including Cowen, began working their magic while their peers cheered them on. Three of the girls, Megan Robillard, Emma Swanson, and Abigale Reynolds, all worked on Pelletier's hair, while Cowen applied makeup. What started out as a tame lipstick application soon went wild. Pelletier had the word "hi" scrawled on her forehead in bright red lipstick, and it didn't stop there. Castle picked up a can of green spray-in hair dye and the crowd of students cheered and chanted "Spray it! Spray it!" And spray it they did. When it was all over, Pelletier was "made over" Blackrock style.

Next, it was Castle's turn. She walked up to the microphone and spoke to her students.

"I want you to think long and

hard before you answer this question. How many of you think I'm a terrible singer?" she asked them. Arms shot up all around the audience and pretty soon most of the students were giggling.

Then the music started, playing that familiar pop song that anyone with a radio has heard at least a few hundred times. Castle began singing and pretty soon the whole thing was reminiscent of a rock concert — students were waving their arms (minus lighters, of course) while they sang along, louder at the chorus sections. Castle was a true rock star, clapping her hands above her head and getting the audience to do the same. When the song ended, the gym erupted in applause and cheers. Again, the students' excitement was something that could easily be felt.

After the performance, Castle admitted that she was nervous

about singing in front of such a large group, but she knew they would sing along.

"She was pretty good," one student admitted.

"We feel that it's important to put ourselves out there and laugh at ourselves for good causes. Every year we try to outdo ourselves, and we let the kids decide, so they're invested in it. They bring in lots of money and in these economic times, for them to bring in ten or twenty dollars at a time, for some families is a lot. I'm really happy that we get to do this every year," Castle said.

While the students get excited about the silly reward at the end of the fundraiser, they also understand that the money they're raising goes towards a good cause.

"I'm so proud of them," Castle said. "It's powerful to me, kids working with the community and helping out others."