

NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS



Middle school art elective students created a Dia de los Muertos display. Photo: Linda Kappen.

Applegate School's youngest students learn about the butterfly's life cycle

BY JEAN HALL

Applegate School staff members speak of this year's "amazing group of students, exemplifying kindness and eagerness to learn." The Applegate School community has shown proud support for the students through monetary and physical help with the jog-a-thon, Harvest Festival, and class Halloween parties.

Looking at class activities, beginning with Mrs. Hirschmugl's kindergarten-first-grade class, students found great enjoyment in learning the life cycle of the butterfly. They experienced the excitement of finding monarch caterpillars, placing them in a safe enclosure, watching them form chrysalises, and then seeing them emerge as beautiful butterflies. Their most exciting moment, said Mrs. Hirschmugl, was releasing the butterflies into the wild to complete the life cycle.

Recognizing the four seasons by watching changes in one of the trees by the school pond is another learning activity for these students. They sketched the tree in the early fall and will sketch it again in the late fall, winter, and spring. The class visited White Oak Farms in October. They fed and held chickens and goats and learned about harvesting different plants. Joining the second-third-grade class, they visited Fort Vannoy pumpkin patch, where they enjoyed the cow train and the corn maze and took home a pumpkin.

Mrs. Halsted's second-third-grade class has also been learning about life cycles, that of plants. They studied trait variation and selection to increase desired traits. They have also been working hard on place value and multiplication concepts in math. The class had a very exciting time with the school jog-a-thon when they completed 369 laps, which is more than 61 miles, for an average of three miles per student. One student ran six miles in one hour! Mrs. Halsted reported that her class raised more than \$2,000, which can be used for class field trips and special projects. She also spoke of the students' enjoyment of the annual dress-up for Halloween, the traditional Ghost Walk, and the class Halloween party.

Mr. Scull praises his fourth- and fifth-graders for their kindness and "their leaps in understanding." Students had the opportunity to vote for the recipient of the "Kindness Award," and at least two-thirds of the class received at least one

vote. The next award in the class will be for displaying skills for "Organization." These skills, Mr. Scull, explained, are essential for building strong relationships and showing self-management skills. Election for class president saw four fifth graders campaigning for the office, a positive experience and an opportunity for the students to make a case for themselves. Battle of the Books is claiming the attention of some of the students who are reading 16 novels to prepare for competition on their knowledge of the books in the spring.

Middle school teacher Mr. Fall added to the praise of the students. He explained that fourth-through-eighth graders who met behavioral standards, as well as reading and academic goals with no missing assignments, were rewarded in October with a movie at Tinseltown and a pizza lunch. "Just our way of patting them on the back and encouraging positive choices," he said, adding that "students are staying healthy, and laughter abounds."

Mrs. Gourley echoed Mr. Fall's praise of the students and described how the middle school student leadership has been busy with many activities such as holding a Halloween-themed school dance, making and selling popcorn each week, organizing the concession stand for volleyball games, and planning a concession stand for the boys' basketball season. All these activities give student leaders a great opportunity to learn responsibility, planning, keeping inventory, and accounting.

Middle school art elective students, led by Mrs. Kappen, did a Dia de los Muertos display. They watched a short film, learning some history of the celebration dating back to the Aztecs. Students created "sugar skulls," painted with watercolors and decorated with markers on skull-shaped diffusing paper. Monarchs were also inserted into the display. Marigolds donated by Michele Grady Scherer from Hi Hoe Produce and K-1 teacher Karen Hirschmugl were threaded by the students, using needles and fish line.

With all these positive experiences led by staff and helped by community members, readers can see that Applegate School students are on a winning team.

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Finding our place at Ruch Outdoor Community School

BY KIM NEISWANGER

With a commitment to help students find a sense of purpose and belonging through a deeper connection with the community, Ruch Outdoor Community School has been following a place-based education model. For professional development and support, we have partnered with Teton Science Schools' Place Network. The Teton network partners with rural schools to provide the kind of education that will increase student engagement, build character, have an impact on the community, and improve learning outcomes while celebrating the unique differences of every community.

Many of our classrooms have already started projects rooted in the principles of place-based education.

Ms. N's first-grade students' project is to set up a lemonade stand. The inspiration for this project came from the middle-school students' Wednesday pizza sales, which earn money for their end-of-year overnight trip. Besides wanting to fill a need in the community, Ms. N's students are hoping to make enough money to give to a charity in our community that supports people who are experiencing poverty. The money will also be used for something fun, such as going to a bowling alley. The students are hoping to expand their business to sell lemonade at local events. For this project, the students have set up companies to explore the areas of design, sales, marketing, and production.

Mrs. Brown's first-grade students are doing a yearlong project of hiking the trails at Forest Park, in Jackson, several times throughout the year to observe the seasonal changes. They will document the changes and produce a display for the community during our Art and Science Fair at the end of the year.

Ms. Kriz and Mrs. Monk's second- and third-grade students visited White Oak Farm to learn about sustainable straw-bale-and-cob building practices. They toured a straw-and-cob house built with beams from timber harvested off the land where the building stood. Students then helped build an eye-catching cob wall near our school garden.

Ms. Major and Ms. Barretto's fourth- and fifth-grade students went to Quady North, where they explored the ecology of our vineyards here in the Applegate Valley. Students learned about the soil and the weather conditions that produce perfect grapes and had the opportunity to harvest some cab franc grapes at their peak. They even engaged in the process of stomping grapes and testing the juice for sugar content. They met the many people it takes to create a bottle of wine.

In partnership with the Southern Oregon University Masters of Science in Environmental Education program, sixth-graders from Mr. Pierson's homeroom class participated in a three-day outdoor learning experience at Cantrall Buckley Park. Graduate students designed and delivered lessons around a variety of topics such as macroinvertebrates, soil sampling, and vegetation monitoring. On the final day, Ruch students planned and then



Ms. N's first-grade students Atlas Simpson, Tucker Wood, Aiden Seaman, Liam Kelleher, and Andy Sochia discuss the name of their lemonade stand. Photo: Kim Neiswanger.



Mr. Pierson's sixth-grade class painted animal-proof trash cans at Cantrall Buckley Park. Photo: Ryan King.

implemented service-learning projects at the park—painting animal-proof trash cans, pulling invasive plants, and planting trees in the riparian zone along the Applegate River.

Mrs. Drane's and Mr. Fox's seventh- and eighth-grade students learned about our local habitats and camped overnight in the large tent structures at Pacifica Gardens. They made baskets out of pine needles, created ceramic art, went fishing, did needle felting, went stargazing, met team and individual challenges, hiked through a small part of the trail on their own, and hiked through four different habitat zones. They learned about the history of the land at Pacifica and gained insight to the culture and value of our community.

Seventh- and eighth-grade students also participated in the Salmon Watch program at McGregor Park. They came away from this experience with knowledge of our local salmon and trout species, the history of salmon in the area and their importance to indigenous peoples, riparian zone health, and sustainable practices with salmon.

We are thankful to our community for welcoming our students as we continue to implement our place-based education model of teaching and learning. If you see us around, be sure to ask us what connections we are making and what impact our learning has on our community and, ultimately, on the world around us. In the words of Alexandra Stoddard, "When you leave a beautiful place, you carry it with you wherever you go."

If you are interested in more information about the Teton Science School and our partnership with it, please visit their website at tetonscience.org/what-we-do/school-network.

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