



Nelson School News

End of Year 2011



Rockfish Volunteers Honored

Rockfish River Elementary School volunteers were treated like royalty at an afternoon tea during "Volunteer Appreciation Week" this spring. Entertainment was provided by the Bright Start 4-year old students who recited nursery rhymes and sang a song. The children then "crowned" each volunteer "RRES Royal Volunteer for 2010-2011" and showered them with gifts. Scones, cookies, hot tea, and punch were enjoyed by all.



Many adults regularly volunteer at the school doing a

variety of jobs to benefit students and teachers. Those present at the tea talked about their work with tutoring students, reading with children, maintaining a butterfly garden on the school grounds, helping with kindergarten registration, and working on the school's yearbook. Several of the volunteers taught classes after school two days a week in this year's Project Opportunity Program, a project-based learning program for students which included SOL assistance and a hands-on project in each of the six-week sessions. RRES is enormously grateful for all of the work done by its volunteers!

NCHS Club meets with Shenandoah University President

On Tuesday, April 12, amid rainstorms and hailstorms, the Interact Club, or the high school Rotary Club, traveled to Winchester for a special meeting with Ms. Tracy Fitzsimmons, president of Shenandoah University. In the university's Board of Directors room, Ms. Fitzsimmons met with the twelve students and two chaperones for about forty-five minutes and told her personal story of involvement with Rotary and of her time as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar in Chile; she also showed slides of Shenandoah's work in helping to rebuild a school in Haiti after the earthquake. She shared many personal stories she had heard when she visited Haiti herself, and the NCHS students later said how deeply the stories moved them. President Fitzsimmons complimented the Interact Club on its book drive which has already sent

eight cartons of pre-K books to Haiti. Nyeela Hueholt, club president, presented a \$50 check collected by the club to aid the re-building project in Haiti

After the meeting, the NCHS students ate lunch in the University Dining Hall and had an extensive tour of the Shenandoah campus. Everyone was happy that the rain let up long enough for the tour!



Next, the group went to the Evans Home for Children in Winchester where they donated nine cartons of books to the library. The Evans Home serves both orphaned children and children who have been legally removed from their parents' custody. The director of the Evans Home was able to give the Interactors a tour of

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NCHS Club continued

the facility because the children, who range in age from six to seventeen, were still in school. As with the slides of Haiti, the students were given a look at teenagers whose life experiences are vastly different from their own. Nyeela also presented a \$50 check to the Evans Home.



The Interact Club's final project for the school year was walking as a team in the Nelson County Relay for Life on May 21st, and many of those on the field trip participated. In addition to Nyeela, on the field trip were Carlton Wallace, Tan Armstrong, Maurice Carter, Dylan Ziemak, Murphy Battle, Cody Harlow, Sean Wood, Mira Kartheiser, William Brown, Rachel L. Johnson, and Rudy Hernandez. Chaperones were Jane Raup, NCHS librarian, and Lynn Hanson, high school teacher and club sponsor. The NCHS Interact Club was founded jointly by the Nelson County Rotary Club and the Amherst Rotary Club.



The following are some quotes from some students: Sean Wood said, "The best field trip ever!"; Murphy Battle wrote, "The field trip was AMAZING!"; Nyeela Hueholt wrote, "Everyone had a blast and felt inspired!"

Go Big Green !

What does "going green" mean at Nelson Middle School? Showing Mustang Pride by wearing school colors? Of course! But as we all know, "going green" means taking care of the environment, and the NMS Ecology Club, led by teacher Mary Johnson, is working hard to create an earth-friendly school. Last spring, thanks to an NCEF grant, students in the Ecology Club got down and dirty as they created a butterfly garden and outdoor classroom in an effort to enhance the life science and ecology curriculum.



Butterfly Garden and Outdoor Classroom

The garden is still thriving! The newest addition to this outdoor sanctuary is a green house used for plant propagation and vermicomposting, the process of using worms and micro-organisms to turn food waste and paper into black, earthy-smelling, nutrient-rich humus.

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Go Big Green! continued



The Ecology Club has also worked tirelessly to make recycling a way of life at Nelson Middle School. One cannot walk far down the halls without seeing a blue recycling bin. Paper, cans, and bottles are collected weekly and recycled. Mrs. Johnson has seen a huge increase in recycling by students and staff since the initiative began and estimates that NMS is recycling up to ninety percent of the paper that is discarded.

In conjunction with the district-wide recycling committee, the Nelson Middle School Ecology Club has made huge progress in changing the way resources are used, reused, and recycled in the building. At Nelson Middle School, it is awesome to GO GREEN!

Things are GROWING on at Tye River

Students in Mrs. Bantz's class at Tye River Elementary are working on growing their own food for some classroom meals and have started a garden in the courtyard area of the school across from their classroom. Mrs. Bantz explains that this class project has been a great opportunity to incorporate many different aspects of the students' learning and to put what they have learned into practice in a real situation. Students used math skills as they measured out the size of the garden, planned out where the plants could go, and then spaced them keeping in mind their mature size. There were also signs that had to be created and posted so that everyone would know the exact location of plantings. Students discussed the fact that growing your own fresh vegetables and fruits was healthier than eating processed foods. Since this was a group project, cooperation and compromise were important as students took turns planting and had to share the use of tools.



This type of project learning engages children and connects their learning to creative activities in the real world. Each week a student is chosen to be the "gardener," and his or her job is to monitor the garden, pull any weeds, and water the plants as needed. The students have already harvested and eaten some of their lettuce, and they are eagerly anticipating the arrival of other fresh foods. One student commented, "I can't wait for the tomatoes. I planted some at home, too, because of the garden project." Another remarked, "I liked planting the spinach. I haven't tried spinach, so I can't wait to try it." I am sure parents wish they heard that more often!