

Slicing Into Science

By Jenna Prieger

When asked if he was nervous for his first dissection, Alex Prieger, a 7th-grade student at Medea Creek, had a clear answer, “Nope, it was exciting!”

Prieger was just one of many students who first dissected a worm, and then a sea star in science this year. His response was similar to many students who, according to 7th-grade science teacher, Ms. Johnson, always say the labs are really fun, neat, and interesting.

“They like pretending they’re doctors,” Johnson says.

Each year, the seventh grade science teachers order hundreds of specimens so that students can dissect them. They work hard to set up and teach the lab. All this saves the students from even more textbook reading. Johnson thinks labs help students learn better “because it’s hands-on.”

7th-grade student Avianna Karkay-Selea agrees with her. “Labs are boring,” she says. “[But in dissections] you can actually see body parts and feel.”

For most students, it took a little over an hour to complete their worm dissection. They had partners to work with, which, according to Karkay-Selea, was better because she “did not want to touch anything.”

The kids learn a lot from it, too. “I learned that if you get a wrinkly worm and try to cut it open, you’ll just get a bunch of dirt,” Prieger said.

Karkay-Selea learned “how small a worm brain is.”

Even the teachers learn things, not about the worms, but about the students.

As Johnson said, “I get to see a different side of them.”

But, as with most schoolwork, the kids encountered problems along the way.

“While cutting the skin my scissors were stuck,” said Karkay-Selea, “and I ripped the worm.” However, that didn’t stop her from having fun and being excited for her next dissection.

For the most part, though, everything went smoothly.

“Everyone does a great job,” said Johnson. For her, the dissections continue to be fun each year because “it brings something new.”

But for the 6th graders out there, this applies to you, too! All the interviews had advice for incoming 7th graders.

Johnson said, “not to be afraid.”

“Don’t be disgusted by organs,” says Priege, “and be very careful with the scissors.”

Karkay-Selea advises to “bring your own gloves and be ready to get dirty!” She wished had tried to touch the animals more, and plans to do just that for her next dissection.

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