

Look Out Sherlock Holmes: Here Comes the Fifth Grade!!



"The microbe is so very small, you cannot make him out at all. In science lab today we hope to see him with a microscope!"

This sums up the experience had by half of the fifth grade classes last week in the Science Adventure Zone! Students in all the 5th grade classes made their first visit to the Science Adventure Zone in conjunction with their unit of study, "Cells and Micro-Organisms."

Little did the students know that they were being personally charged by the CDC to solve a "Microbial Illness Mystery." Without their help, a virtual pandemic was threatening to hit the city of Alpharetta!



The purpose of this one hour visit was to explore

some key concepts about microorganisms that your students are studying in their current science unit. In addition, we sought to provide the students with some high-tech, high-touch experience in the use of microscopes.

Activity 1: A Microbial "Mystery"

When students entered the lab, they were informed of the following scenario: a man had fallen severely ill and rushed to Northside Hospital. The only thing doctors knew for sure was the last 3 locations the man was known to have visited before the illness struck: his neighborhood pool, Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee River. Armed only with their microscopes and prepared slides representing 'samples' taken from the patient and those three locations, students had to determine which location matched the sample of the patient, thus revealing where he had been contaminated! Our fifth graders proved themselves to be excellent microbiologists as well as detectives, solving the mystery with 100% accuracy. Along the way, they viewed amazing samples of microbes, including paramecium, amoeba, hydra, spirogyra and many others.

Activity 2: Making and Viewing Slides

After solving our Microbial Mystery, students continued their exploration of the microscope by creating and viewing their own slides. Their own hair, finger nails and samples from local water sources provided the fuel for ample cries of "Cool!" and "Awesome!" One student commented, "I wish I could be a scientist so I could do this all day long!" Exactly the kind of enthusiasm we

hope the Science Adventure Zone will create in our budding scientists!



A big thank you to all the parents who volunteered their time to assist our students during this visit! In addition to our lab coordinator, every lab requires at least four parents as Center

Activity Leaders. It is only through their time and dedication that our students get to experience exciting science in action! If you would like to volunteer an hour of your time to help with the fifth grade's next visit to the Science Adventure Zone, please email Karen Foreman (Karen@kwross.com) and she will contact you with the details. The job of Center Activity Leader requires no experience and little preparation (all information will be provided to you). However, volunteers must be trained.

A very special thanks to our Fifth Grade Lab Coordinator, Brenda Last.

Most of our parent volunteers had not used a microscope in many years.

Brenda patiently and expertly reacquainted us with the amazing world of microbes, and before long, our volunteers seemed to have come straight from the CDC!



If you have any questions about the Science Adventure Zone, or would like to get involved please email Karen Ross-Foreman (Karen@kwross.com).