Math At Work seminar enlightens students

BY DEBBIE HIGH TOWER

The math that students are learning in middle school can serve them well long after they graduate from high school and college. Communities in Schools of Randolph County showed students how workers in various fields use math to do their jobs during a Math At Work seminar held last month at Braxon Craven Middle School.

"This is a crime scene. Back away, sir!" With an extended arm, Braxon Craven student Isaiah was all business as he assumed the role of detective Luna, mathematician Dominic measured the precise location of a footprint within the perimeter as Praise recorded each calculation.

In his role as victim, write-up suspect Gracie — an innocent volunteer — was led off to jail.

"We found this weapon and we pulled these prints off of it," said Sparks to the class, presenting a plastic weapon with a rubber-gloved hand. Braxon handcuffed suspect Gracie — an innocent volunteer — and led her off to jail.

"I never really realized that they had to do all those measurements at a crime scene," said sixth-grader Trace, who named the crime prevention scene as his favorite during the Math At Work seminar.

Sparks was just one of 16 professionals who visited the school to demonstrate the relevance of math in their everyday careers. Pharmacist Leslie Wells allowed students to spend a day in her shoes by determining the proper dosage of medication — in the form of candy Nerdies — for an animal that weighs 6.6 pounds.

Braxon Craven students were excited to meet bakery owner Angela Beaver, pictured here with Katherine, Labela and Soylin. During her presentation, Beaver described how she used math to calculate a recipe for 300 cupcakes that were decorated and arranged in the pattern of a snake.

"They get so much out of it," said event organizer Holly Grissom, a Braxon Craven math teacher. "Anything that can spark their interest and point them in a career direction is a positive.

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"We took a piece of grid paper and made a floor plan for the house," said Conrad of remodeling and construction expert David Rimes. "In the media center, Amy Capurso gave students a taste of the nationwide initiative Hour of Coding that can give participants an inside edge to the careers of the future.

"I am interested in learning the various ways that workers use math," said a student. "I like math.

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