Students find their ‘happy places’

Heritage Arts Day held at Trinity Elementary

BY DEBBIE HIGHTOWER

TRINITY — Students at Trinity Elementary were in for a treat last week when Heritage Arts Day exposed them to visual arts, music and dance, in addition to a lot of non-traditional arts.

Heritage Arts Day was organized by specials teachers which included P.E. teacher Julie Dobias; April Ingram, technology; art teacher Chloe Mintel; Paul Masterson, guidance; and music teacher Cody Weavil.

Guest artist Emily Snyder thought bubble painting with watercolors would be a fun activity and, as it turned out, she was right.

With mannerisms that more closely resembled that of a game show host, Fred Jones’ light-hearted banter kept an entire classroom of students entertained all while he produced a pastel portrait of their classmate.

A minute spent on the back of a pretend horse was the favorite activity of kindergartner Rayan Ahmed at Trinity Elementary School’s Heritage Arts Day last week. Here, Rayan’s first equestrian performance is cheered by kindergarten teacher Cassidy Kovacicek and classmate Boone Haiman.

Photo by Debbie Hightower

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To entertain students, however, the expert storyteller used volume, pitch and strategic pauses as he related a humorous tale about Jo Diddy, who climbed up a tree backwards.

In most cases during the day, students had the opportunity for hands-on experiences that enhanced their learning.

Cara Byram showed students how to draw animals from photographs, then invited them to draw their own.

“Mine is an alien spider,” declared one youngsters.

Arts Academy Dance instructor Wendy Sandler showed listeners the secret of ballet pointe dancing. The inside of a proper ballet slipper supports a dancer’s foot with a toe box formed from wood or leather.

“Ballet is the foundation of all dance,” she said. “Your feet have to be super strong in order to be on point.”

After demonstrations of ballet, tap, jazz and hip-hop routines, Sandler got them up and doing to “Turkey in the Straw.”

It was too cold to bring an actual horse, but getting to sit atop a real horse saddle was the highlight of the day for kindergarten students Kayan Ahmed, Robin Rezian and Eliabeth Millikan.

Students took “paws” to visit with Dewey, a nine-year-old Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever who is part of Therapy Dogs International.

With years of experience visiting hospitals, nursing homes and schools, Dewey was mellow as Trinity Elementary students hugged and petted him.

Participants especially enjoyed relaxation techniques taught by yoga instructor Carinna Pugh. After crashing godsdal and King Kong through the performance of basic tree and bridge poses, Pugh showed budding yogis a “happy place” pose to which they can retreat any time to alleviate stress.

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