Wheatmore students visit Hopewell

Spanish III class presents unique books

BY DEBBIE HIGHTOWER

Reading, speaking and writing Spanish was the order of business during a visit from the Wheatmore High School Spanish III class to Hopewell Elementary School. Both visitors and hosts brought lots of Spanish language experience to the table.

Early in the semester, Wheatmore Spanish III teacher Elizabeth Palma assigned her students to write and illustrate stories in Spanish. Before the visit Wheatmore teacher Kelly Ivey printed and bound the books.

Students in Spanish immersion classrooms have Spanish-language books available to read, but the books presented to them by Wheatmore students were theirs to keep.

Most of the stories were simple with a humorous twist. It was a good thing Ivey printed multiple copies of “Gato Ninja” (Ninja cat). It was a popular title with multiple students desiring to read it.

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Right: With sheer delight, Katie was thrilled to add “El niño y el hipopótamo” to her collection.
A visit to Hopewell Elementary School was nostalgic for this group of Wheatmore High School freshmen. New in Spanish II class, they were the first group of Spanish immersion students at Hopewell Elementary School. From left, Cameron Hatchet, Camden Whish, Wheatmore Spanish teacher Elizabeth Palma, Hopewell Principal Sharon Harper, Koli Toshner, Lucas Smith and Isaac Seagle.

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"Gato Negro" author Isaac Seagle revealed the inspiration for his work.
"I like chickens but there weren't many pictures out there. I changed it to a cat."

For some of the students it was a reunion of sorts.
Principal Sharon Harper was especially glad to see the return of Cameron Hatchet, Cameron Whish, Koli Toshner, Lucas Smith and Isaac Seagle, who were among the first Hopewell Elementary School Spanish Immersion students in 2005-2006 during their kindergarten year.

With funding from the supplementary Archdale-Trinity tax, Randolph County Schools and some additional grant funding, in successive years more Spanish immersion classes were added at Hopewell Elementary School.
Currently there are Spanish immersion classes taught by native speakers at each grade level. In addition, Archdale-Trinity Tax funds a Spanish immersion bridge at Reaion Crenn School and Archdale-Trinity Middle School so that students will maintain fluency in the language.

"If they can place out of Spanish in high school it gives them the opportunity to take more honors courses," said Archdale-Trinity Tax Advisory Council Chairman John Cable.
Hopewell first-graders entertained their visitors with a song "Banderas de Libertad" which translates as "flags of freedom."

After they finished reading their new books high schoolers and Hopewell students chatted in Spanish.
When it was time for them to return to the high school, neither group was ready to part.
Teacher Elizabeth Barrios Mesa said, "It was a perfect experience because my students can see how other students are interested in Spanish, are speaking Spanish and creating books in Spanish, They were excited to see them come."

After his new friends left first-grader Kyle was still clutching his new book as a momento of the visit.
"It's good," he said, "Across the table, Avery added, "I liked it."

Whatmore students brought books they had written and illustrated to Hopewell. Student in the Spanish immersion class at Hopewell are encouraged to read, write and speak in Spanish. Pictured here, Easton was lucky enough to receive two books.

Jennifer Caraboua enjoyed visiting Sara Barrios' classroom where she listened to Bryn Holdan read one of the new books.

Jessica Thompson smiles in approval as second-grader Hailey Hicks reads one of the books written for Hopewell Spanish immersion students by Wheatmore Spanish II students.

The Spanish connection was a win-win situation for both high school visitors and their elementary school hosts.