Southwest students bring science to life for elementary students

Southwest High School students stepped into the role of teachers for nearby elementary schools. The students developed biology lessons for Hill, Cavett, Pyrtle and Wysong elementary classes through the organism visitation program. It’s all part of Southwest Science Department Chair Charley Bittle’s class. The Silverhawks designed education packets for the elementary students including facts, writing prompts and anatomy sheets based on their learning level.

“It’s fun. It was a lot of responsibility,” Southwest sophomore Sophie said. “I felt like a leader in some sorts.”

“Elementary students go through the notice and wonder process within their own science curricula. What my students prepare for the visitation program reverses that notice and wonder, meaning my students have a grasp of the content and break it down so elementary students can ‘notice and wonder,’” Bittle said.

This year, Southwest students dropped off a plant or animal at nearby elementary schools for the children to explore for a week. A pair of geckos visited Jenna Tederman’s fourth-grade classroom at Hill.

“They’re really nice because they can let us do fun stuff with creatures that some of us might not know about,” Hill fourth grade student Brecken said.

“It’s really cool to see what the high schoolers have planned for us,” Hill fourth grade student Chloe added.

In addition to the lessons, the fourth graders also got to care for the geckos like feeding them and watering their cage. Some even held the reptiles and saw in real time how they adapted to their new habitat.

“Seeing the kids work with and learn from the geckos has been very powerful. I learned so much about the students and how fearless, gentle, excited, and knowledgeable they are with animals,” Hill fourth grade teacher Jenna Tederman said.

The project serves a dual purpose. It not only furthers the knowledge of the elementary students but the Southwest Biology students as well.

“It allowed me better to learn how to format research projects I’d say and if it helped me learn more about the anatomy of the organism,” Southwest ninth grade student Dean said.

The program is a continuation of the Alive and Satisfied Project created by Lincoln Public Schools educators Tim Golden and Jerry Saunders.

Look at some of the highlights from the LSW’s Organism Visitation Program below.

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Southwest High School students prepared biology lessons for a pair of leopard geckos that visited Jenna Tederman’s fourth-grade class at Hill Elementary.

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