



Fifth-graders get special view of life at Monticello

Charlottesville fifth-graders have a whole new perspective on Monticello.

Thanks to a grant from Wachovia Corporation, Monticello's Carl and Hunter Smith Department of Education completed its first Plantation Life Program for all fifth-graders at Charlottesville's Walker Upper Elementary School.


















The program, conducted in November, consisted of two parts. The first featured Monticello education instructors visiting all 15 fifth-grade classrooms at Walker with collections of reproduction artifacts for the students to touch, examine, and analyze. Among the items were tinted spectacles like those worn by Thomas Jefferson, a page from his daughter Martha Jefferson's day book, and hand-forged nails like those made by some of the enslaved children on Mulberry Row. While studying the artifacts, the fifth-graders got to ask questions and draw conclusions about the lives of the many different people who called the Monticello plantation home.

The second part of the program was a field trip to Monticello for an in-depth tour of the house, dependencies, and Mulberry Row. Throughout the tour, the Walker students were encouraged to make connections between what they had learned in the classroom and what they were discovering as they explored the mountaintop. The students "had a great time and were excited about what they had learned," said Walker teacher Jocelyn Kuzminski. "They couldn't stop

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Fifth Graders

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sharing all the way home!”

The Plantation Life Program was designed to assist in teaching several of the Standards of Learning required by the state of Virginia regarding Jefferson and life on early Virginia plantations. Social studies teachers at Walker

said the topics covered in the program fit extremely well with the fifth-grade SOL curriculum. “The experience of seeing and handling colonial items really helped prepare the students for their visit to Monticello,” Walker teacher Mary Byers said, “and the trip itself was such a great opportunity for them to see for themselves what life was like long ago”.

“We’re delighted to have had this opportunity to work so closely with one of our local schools,” said Caroline Lowry, Monticello’s assistant director of education, “and extremely grateful to Wachovia for their support of this important educational opportunity.”



Courtesy Julie Lay / Walker Upper Elementary School

Monticello’s Penny Kiser with students at Walker.

COMMENTS? newsletter@monticello.org