

S. Tahoe students get a dose of ag education



Chris and Tom Celio of Meyers talk about how they use pack animals today in the Tahoe basin. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

CAMP RICHARDSON – Small hands are sifting through the sand, dirt and top soil; others are getting a lesson in how pack animals are still used in the basin; another group is getting educated about fire.

These were just a few of the 29 presentations that nearly 700 third- and fourth-graders were visiting at Camp Richardson on Sept. 22 as part of Ag in the Classroom day. Each group was able to go to six of the stations throughout the day.

Ryder Preston is pouring a container of water into grass that looks like it is growing out of a gutter that has been cut in half. It's taking a while for the water to reach the bucket at the other end. This is proving how grass absorbs a ton of water. And at the end the water is yellowish. It started out pristine. Nutrients in the fertilizer help cause the discoloration.



Students get to feel soil as Brian Hirdman teaches them about what materials are good for growing plants.

Aaron Hussmann with the League to Save Lake Tahoe is demonstrating what a winter storm does when it hits different things on the ground – dirt, grass, wood chips with plants, and then what the water looks like that comes out at the other end.

This is the third year Tahoe students have been able to participate in the hands-on lessons, whereas it has been going on in Placerville for 14 years.

Avis Jolly, who runs the program, said this age group is targeted because they are able to grasp the various lessons that are being taught and it introduces them to things they

may not have been aware of. Teachers are given curriculum they may use before and/or after the field trip to continue on with science and other lessons.



Aaron Hussmann with the League to Save Lake Tahoe has third-grader Ryder Preston demonstrate how long it takes water to pass through sod.

One of those things is how important agriculture is to El Dorado County's economy. Apples are the No. 1 commodity, with grapes and timber near the top.

Chris and Tom Celio are on the far side of the grounds with their horse Dusty. He is used for packing and riding. Celio horses have been working in the basin since the 1800s when they used to bring milk from Meyers to Camp Richardson. Today, they carry tools, water and gravel for crews who are doing trail work for the Tahoe Rim Trail Association and U.S. Forest Service.



Amy Jo Storlie colors
a watershed.

For Amy Jo Storlie, she liked the nutrition station where she learned she should probably be eating more protein, vegetables and fruits. At the watershed area she and her Sierra House Elementary third-grade classmates were coloring a photo to demonstrate what a watershed is.

“It’s important for kids to learn the lifecycle of food,” Adam Jones, Lake Tahoe Unified School District board member, told *Lake Tahoe News* as he toured the various stations. “This helps connect students to the land.”