

BBS students 'pay it forward'

By Diane Goble
Correspondent

When Black Butte School teacher Stephanie Blakelock was informed that her classroom had won \$100 from the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District for participating in the FireBusters program fire safety month last October, she was told she could use the funds in her classroom in any way she wished. She decided to teach her K-5 students the important life lesson of paying it forward by giving back to the firehouse.

She taught the children about the domino effect of random acts of kindness by showing them a video about one person helping another, and that person helping another and so on and so on.

When Heather Miller from Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District called to tell Blakelock about the \$100, she asked how she wanted to have the check presented and Blakelock told her she would bring her class to the fire department with lunch, and Miller offered a tour of the fire department.

Blakelock purchased lunch from Sisters Subway and Costco for the fire personnel. When she told Subway crew member Austin Hinshaw for

whom she was ordering sandwiches, what she was doing, he took \$10 out of his pocket to add to the pot. This left enough cash for each of the eight students to make a personal donation of \$4 to the fire department to spend any way they wished.

When she told a Costco manager what she was doing, he asked her to write a letter explaining the pay-it-forward idea and Costco would send a donation to the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District to keep paying it forward.

At the fire station in the community room, the children introduced themselves, with good manners and eye contact, to the wildland firefighters and local firefighter/paramedics and support staff. They were treated to a PowerPoint presentation about fire safety and got to meet and hug Smokey Bear and Sparky, who taught them about fire safety.

Shift Commander Jeremy Ast and the firefighters then brought the children out to see the fire trucks where they learned about different vehicles for different emergencies and locations; the equipment they carry and what each is used for; and how they manage the hoses and the water in the trucks and fire hydrants. They got to climb inside an

ambulance and see all the equipment needed to help people in a medical emergency.

Next they were taken on a tour of the living quarters to see how the firefighters spend their time when not fighting fires or responding to emergencies. Each shift has its own refrigerator and pantry. There is a TV room and a weight room, and individual sleeping cubicles. Next came the part the kids were all waiting for — a ride around Sisters in a fire truck.



PHOTO BY DIANE GOBLE

A firefighter in full turnout chatted with students from Black Butte School.

“ I felt really good to do something nice for the firefighters and to pay it forward by doing something nice for other people. — Robert Harwell

When they all got back to the station, lunch was served and the children got to sit with the firefighters and ask all the questions they wanted about the life of a firefighter.

Following are quotes

from the children about their experience:

Kindergartner Robert Harwell said, “I felt really good to do something nice for the firefighters and to pay it forward by doing something nice for other people.”

Sawyer Kiefer, a third-grader, said, “I was really excited to go to the fire house to see how firefighters live and how hard it would be to fight fires and save lives.”

For fifth-grader Cody Hanks, “Paying it forward made me feel happy about myself because I was able to give back with the money we

won. Normally I wouldn't be able to give out of my own pocket, so this was really great to be able to do.”

“My favorite parts of the day were seeing the inside of the ambulance, sitting in the front seat of the fire truck while the firefighter was driving, and best of all was sitting with the firefighters eating lunch,” said fifth-grader Reese Harwell.

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