

ANTONIO
VARGAS-PELAYO
IN THE
CLASSROOM.



When *la escuela* ends July 20 this year, Bartlett believes, *los estudiantes* will retain skills and vocabulary they can take into the classroom this fall.

Education Program, she knows the “regular” school drill: families move across school district lines to work, say, on a nearby Christmas tree farm, or maybe the chicken processing plant in Creswell. After interviewing the family in their first language, officials say it’s OK for the kids to enroll in migrant ed. In addition to school-year programs, that means they’re eligible for sum-

mer school, at least for the three federally-mandated years from the date of their move.

Bray remembers the first year, when *la escuela* served about 40 first to fifth graders. But teachers had a lot more to do than teach. Because many students come from far away, she says, “They need a breakfast when they get to school and a lunch before we put them on the bus.”

That first year, Bray and another teacher, with their two bilingual aides, were teacher-chefs. “We had to do all the shopping for the food and prepare it.”

Things are a little different now. For one thing, both breakfast and lunch come from FOOD for Lane County. Guadalupe Moreno says that at least 300 students from Lane County qualify for summer school, but only the least English-adept 140 may attend because of funding. Teachers have more experience. The bus rides have gotten longer as areas farther away participate. And, of course, there’s No Child Left Behind, which means the teachers in summer school want to help their students meet “regular school” standards.

But *la escuela de verano* isn’t all reading, writing and arithmetic. Who could persuade 140 children to spend four summer weeks inside — and who would want to?

“Kids who are having fun actually learn more,” Stephanie Bartlett says. In Señora Steff’s classroom, lunchtime creates community. “We eat together as a family,” she says. Over lunch last year, Rossy Sanchez, Bartlett’s bilingual aide, read *Watch Out for Clever Women! ¡Cuidado con las mujeres astutas!* This book, a collection of tales from the Southwest about “women who had to overcome adversity by being clever,” helped the kids learn about problem-solving skills and their cultural background.

When school’s out after lunch, the kids usually hop on the bus for home. Sometimes, though, they go on trips — especially to Splash!, the Willamalane wave pool. The Boy Scouts, after taking some time to connect with elders in the Latino community, have planned a couple more after-school adventures and trips. But the focus is on state standards, geography and reading skills, and the students, Bartlett says, work hard to achieve their goals.

When *la escuela* ends July 20 this year, Bartlett believes *los estudiantes* will retain skills and vocabulary they can take into the classroom this fall. They also will have widened their circle of friends, both kid and adult.

As class began on the 27th, a pre-kinder boy bawled. His mother comforted him and hugged him, but she gradually moved away until she was in the hallway, one ear cocked toward the door, listening to the sounds of 4- and 5-year-olds chatting in two languages.

Bartlett loves *la escuela de verano* and its students. “They’re just amazing little people. We’re going to have fun!” ■



“The lemon accented the beer’s natural citrus notes.”



ROB WIDMER

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