

Geoteam learns advanced mapping

By Leslie Mitts
Spilyay Tymoo

Chezeray Starr tried to find his way across a field while blindfolded—and it was all part of an after-school activity designed to teach local youth mapping skills.

Starr, a sixth grader, is one of several members of the 4-H Geoteam.

The blindfold exercise was designed to show how easy it is to lose your sense of direction because each person has one dominant foot or another when they are walking. That's only a portion of what Starr and his fellow Geoteam members have learned during their weekly club meetings.

According to Shawn Morford of OSU Extension Services, the 4-H Geoteam was formed after a grant awarded their program a chance to purchase multiple licenses for geographic information systems (GIS) software.

The skills students are learning are not skills that are available in any classes at their schools, Morford said. She added, "They're learning skills that kids from Madras don't have the opportunity to learn."

The 4-H Geoteam consists of middle school and high school students in Warm Springs.

"GIS software is not being taught in the schools, currently," Morford said. She added, "It's a very valuable job skill."

In fact, it is a job skill that is used locally in departments like Natural Resources and Planning.

Trisha Stradley works in the GIS office at Natural Resources and often helps the students involved with the 4-H Geoteam.

She's shown them different types of maps used in the Natural Resources Department and will soon be giving students a tour of the office and showing them the software that they use.

Stradley said the students will definitely benefit from the club because they don't have the opportunity to learn these skills in school. When she was in high school, Stradley said, she



Leslie Mitts/Spilyay

Chezeray Starr is a member of the 4-H Geoteam.

learned similar skills through three years of forestry classes—but local students don't have that opportunity.

"I think having this program kind of fills that void," Stradley said.

The group also has help from volunteer Don Bilyeu, a retired forest service employee.

While the group started off learning basics like features of maps, Morford said, eventually they will learn how to make maps electronically.

Recently the students travelled to Portland for a field trip. Nine students made the trip and participated in a scavenger hunt.

The students stayed in a hostel that hosted the scavenger hunt, Morford said.

"They gave kids maps of the city and said, 'We're at this hostel and we want you to get over to the other hostel on the other side of town using the transit system,'" Morford explained.

"We had to take a streetcar, the max, and a bus and kids were in charge of plotting out their route, finding the right bus and the right time," Morford said. "It was a race to see who could get there first."

Along the way the students

had to complete other tasks—like finding out how much it costs to get into Chinese gardens.

The experience taught students about map reading as well as self-confidence, independence and teamwork. Also, Morford said. "It was a blast. It was really fun."

Later the students will complete a community mapping project—something that Morford said will help them develop other skills like communication.

"The kids will decide what kind of features they want in the map," Morford explained. "We also hope that the exercise that they're going to do in mapping the community will give them a better connection to the community."

When it is finished the map will be displayed publicly.

In the end, Morford said, "They're going to take away a very valuable job skill—highly valued and highly sought after job skill."

"It will put them ahead of their classmates in a pretty valuable skill," Morford said. "And it should be fun."

For any interested students, there is still time to join.

Native American Heritage Art Market at museum

The Museum at Warm Springs will host a Native American Heritage Art Market on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 29 and 30.

The event will feature local artisans with Columbia River Plateau Traditional Art and Native American Contemporary Arts and Crafts for sale.

The market will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the museum. There is no admission charge for the market and guests who sign up at the registration desk will be eligible for door prizes.

Drawings for door prizes will be held on Saturday every half hour. For more information call 553-3331.

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Young Achiever

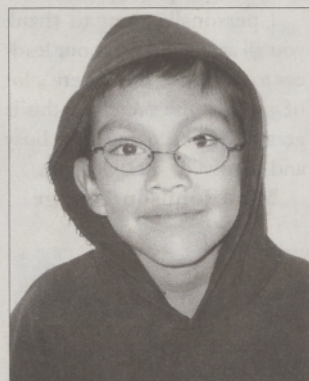
Jake Frank, an 8-year-old third grade student at Warm Springs Elementary School, is currently excelling in math.

"He's an outstanding mathematician," according to Principal Dawn Smith.

Jake said that math is his second favorite subject in school. His favorite is physical education—especially outdoor sports.

According to Jake, "When we play outside in soccer it builds up most of our bones."

When it comes to math,



Jake said he has already learned about multiplication and division and is now starting to learn about fact families.

While he's good at math now, Jake said that he might not have been as excellent at math before. "Probably not as much as now," he added.

Jake lives with his grandmother, Anna Clements, and has one brother and three sisters.

One of his favorite hobbies after school is playing with his two dogs, Jake said.

When he grows up, Jake plans to become a teacher. "It's just really fun—like a fun job," Jake explained.

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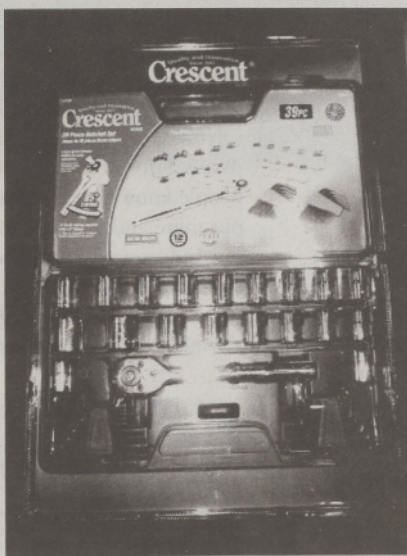
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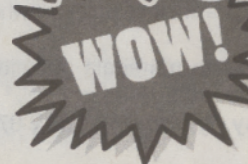


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