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Published October 29th, 2008

## Red Ribbon Week Reminds Kids to Make Healthy Choices

By Jean Follmer



1st Grade Class Lafayette Elementary School with teacher Tina Skuce Photo provided

"Are you doing the right thing at the right time with the right people?" asks Springhill Red Ribbon Week Coordinator Karen Elliott. Springhill's Red Ribbon Week theme this year is "Do the Right Thing."

Springhill kicked off Red Ribbon Week with a highly attended assembly featuring Ralph the Great of "The Pro-Kids Show." "In his entertaining show, which included magic, illusions, comedy, student participation and a very funny puppet named Rosco, Ralph the Great taught the children some very important lessons. These messages included: cooperation, honesty takes courage, doing the right thing when nobody is looking proves you have excellent character, and respect your teachers," said Elliott.

While Springhill always kicks off Red Ribbon Week with an assembly, this was the first year with Ralph the Great. Elliott said she's received the best feedback to date as a result of "The Pro-Kids Show". Elliott has been the Red Ribbon Week chair at Springhill for five years and said she received the best assembly feedback to date after Ralph the Great. "I really feel passionate about this," said Elliott. Each of the Lafayette schools has a different approach to Red Ribbon Week and Elliott would like to see a more cooperative approach in the future. "I would love to see the other schools use my assembly guy," said Elliott. In some other districts, the assembly is offered on different days at different schools and culminates in a larger presentation for the entire community to attend at the local high school.

Springhill is piloting a program for the district called Character Counts. The program is based on six pillars: Trustworthy, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. The pillars are part of daily conversation in and out of the

classroom and each pillar is assigned a color. Springhill decided to incorporate the Character Counts colors into Red Ribbon Week this year. One day was blue and yellow for "Trustworthy" and "Character" and another was orange for "Fairness". Red stood for "Caring" in addition to Red Ribbon Week and Green and Purple stood for "Responsibility" and "Citizenship". The students were engaged in a scavenger hunt, poster making and a "Wheel of Fortune" game show hosted by Principal Bruce Wodhams.

Lafayette Elementary's Red Ribbon Week activities were coordinated by Kathy Dexter. The Lafayette Elementary theme is "Healthy Choices for Healthy Futures." "We really focused on making healthy choices now. It could be eating correctly, turning off the television and video games in your home, having family time, reading or playing with your friends. We're reminding the kids with red ribbons," said Dexter. Lafayette started Red Ribbon Week by tying red ribbons around the school and handing out red pencils and red bracelets to use and wear throughout the week. Students were encourage to bike or walk to school or engage in some type of exercise-related activity during the week. Students throughout the school made posters and parent volunteers hung them. On Friday, the students wore red to school. "The general feedback is positive. It reminds families about healthy choices," said Dexter.

Happy Valley Elementary also participated in Red Ribbon Week last week. They also encourage students to bike or walk to school and to wear red. Happy Valley also asked their families to have a "Family Night". Danette Wieczynski said they wanted the families to talk about things that were both healthy and unhealthy. The children were asked to write a pledge at home about what healthy choices they will put into practice. "At Happy Valley, we seek to incorporate the themes of Red Ribbon Week into our current goals of helping our children make Healthy Choices for Healthy Futures. This begins at home," said Wieczynski. Daily prizes included passes to Jamba Juice and Family Fun Packs from Blockbuster.

Burton Valley Elementary is holding their Red Ribbon Week this week. Burton Valley Secretary Marsha Dahl said all the students wore red on Monday and were given a Healthy Choices worksheet to take home and complete with their families. "Our big thing is Wednesday we're doing a walk-a-thon where all of the students participate for 30 minutes," said Dahl.



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