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Educational Enrichment for Young Patriots 25 October 2011

Columbus Day Enrichment at Riverview Elementary School Empowers Students to Never Quit

On October 21, 2011, about 150 first grade students at the Spotsylvania County Riverview Elementary School learned about Christopher Columbus and the people associated with him. The enrichment for the Virginia SOL for first grade history and social sciences was provided at no cost to the school by the Educational Enrichment for Young Patriots (EEYP), a local, parent and veteran-owned non-profit organization in Fredericksburg. The goal of the enrichment was to help students better understand history through the achievements of great leaders in the past, and empower students to become leaders in their school and community.

The students learned that Columbus' ideas about the new world were repeatedly rejected, but he never gave up on the dream of westward exploration to find new lands. First grade students saw a real-life Christopher Columbus, portrayed by an interpreter wearing period clothing. The students also saw maps and diagrams of the ships used by Columbus, which explained how they sailed across the ocean blue, in 1492.

The principal of Riverview Elementary, Mrs. Dianne Holmes, has embraced opportunities for enrichments offered by EEYP, which allowed her students to benefit from creative teaching approaches. The same group of students last year received the Kindergarten Enrichment for the SOL related to George Washington and Betsy Ross, and the same group shall receive a second grade specific enrichment about John Smith and Pocahontas. The goal of EEYP is to provide sustained enrichments for students throughout the grades K-5. Allison Forney, the female interpreter for EEYP, provides first person interpretations of Betsy Ross, Queen Isabella, Pocahontas, and Molly Pitcher.

Surveys completed after the enrichment by teachers and students indicate success. A teacher commented that students were already interested in Columbus, and the enrichment helped to enhance their understanding. Another teacher conducted a classroom discussion after the enrichment and determined the students benefited most from the emotions acted out by the presenter, a civics lesson of respectfulness. Of 26 students surveyed collectively, 50% admitted they felt history in general was boring, but 25% now expressed a new interest, and the same amount wanted to learn more about the people in the enrichment. Ninety-eight percent of the students would like to see more enrichments, and 100% would ask their parents to take them to local historical places.

The Columbus Day Enrichment was provided to about 150 first grade students at Riverview Elementary School. The Educational Enrichment for Young Patriots, Inc. (EEYP), a local 501(c)3 non-profit corporation helps students better understand history through the achievements of great leaders in the past and empowers students to become leaders in their school and community. EEYP is eligible to receive charitable contributions from VA residents and businesses that are tax deductible under the law. For more information go on line to <http://www.educationalenrichment.org>.