



Learning about the different states at Rocky View Elementary

What is the capital of California? What is the state fruit of Georgia? What is the official state bird of New Mexico?

Perhaps like others you may find yourself scratching your head to find the answers. Parents and children found these answers and more at “Around the United States Night” held at Rocky View

Elementary April 4. Children at the school got the chance to learn and display interesting information about the different states they chose. Yummy goodies from each state were on hand for the tasting for the “state travelers.” States represented included South Carolina, Florida, California, Indiana, Hawaii, and of course, New Mexico.

Principal Debbie Arthur handed out “boarding passes” at the entrance of the school. She expressed a real thrill at the huge turn-out. In the past, the school has done an “Around the World” theme, displaying different countries. But this year they decided to show off the United States, she said. Books were also given out at the entrance, to encourage reading. Cultures, food, and geography were the main emphasis of the event.

“We decided to do the United States so that the kids could get familiar with their own home, America,” Arthur said. “They can get to know the states, and know that they are not countries (laughing), that they’re all part of the union. We wanted them to experience and see how each state is different, the characteristics and the uniqueness of them – but yet similarities.”

The State of Georgia was represented in a third grade classroom, with delicious samples of peach cobbler, sweet peach tea, and children’s artwork of the state. Crafts were done in the classroom while boarding passes were either stamped, or stickers were placed on them. The teachers explained interesting facts about the state, while a projector displayed famous landmarks. The third grade classroom was popular with visitors because of the peach cobbler.

Holding on to their boarding passes, children and parents then made their way to sunny California, where fifth grade teacher, Ms. Leo, a Los Angeles native, welcomed all to the hot state. Music from a boom box rang out *California Girls* by Katy Perry, *California Love* by Tupac, and visitors got to take pictures of the Hollywood Walk of Fame stars with students’ names substituted for movie actors. A table was set with California produce.

“On the California foods, we focused on the central valleys like grapes, carrots, and cantaloupe, just to name a few of the variety of fruits and vegetables we grow in sunny California. We also have a hummus mix,” Leo said.

On hand visiting the event was Rep. D. Wonda Johnson, D-Church Rock. Johnson was quite pleased with the event and saw how children can become more engaged with geography. Being

a world traveler herself, Johnson spoke of visiting places such as South America, different communities, and as well as many other states.

“I think it’s wonderful that our students are studying about geography, and the work that they have put into their boards and posters,” she said. “I think it’s great they are sharing the foods, highlights, and the culture of the states. It’s good that we expose our children to the world.”

As the “travelers” made their way around, different smells from different classes made it hard to choose which state would be next. Hawaii was represented and of course small cups of pineapple slices were given out, as well free lessons on how to do the hula, with complimentary leis.

Down in the school gym, the State of Arizona was represented with Navajo Language Teacher, Mr. Joe, who had his students sing songs in the Navajo language. Basket weavings were hung on a wall to show a bit of the state culture.

Native born visitor of the state was Dion Tewa, who applauded the entire event, and gave extra kudos to the students. The students dressed in traditional clothing and did sign language to help the audience sing along. “I thought the whole thing was just awesome and the food was great,” he said. “I’m going back to the State of Georgia and get me some more peach cobbler.”

By Dee Velasco
For the Sun