Annual Navajo Sovereignty Day teaches important cultural lessons

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Rocky View Elementary recently celebrated its, “Third Annual Navajo Sovereignty Day” April 27, with different activities and booths to teach students the significance of Navajo Sovereignty Day through cultural activities, displays and regalia.

Activities included how to make fryread, Navajo rug weaving, and Dine dancing with the Rocky View Elementary students participating dressed in their regalia.

Kindergarten up to the fifth grade participated in several dances. According to Jimson Joe, who is the Navajo Language and Culture teacher, the dancing carried the whole festivities this year.

“The students really put a lot of work into it,” Joe said. “It teaches them harmony and working together.”

Joe taught the students dances, which included the Line and Circle dances, which emphasized the Four Sacred Directions in the Navajo culture. Students this year have become more attune to the dances than the previous two years.

“I’m surprised there was a big interest in Navajo dancing this year, and they made it look easy. I’m really proud of them,” Joe said.

Parents also showed their support as well as volunteering at several of the booths, that included an Origin of Clans, video on the Dine, and a puppet show. Tasty samples of fry bread were given out to all participants.

“Navajo Sovereignty Day was presented to have students become more aware of who they are as Dine’ and how history has importance in what we are teaching as far as language is concerned,” Joe said.

Debbie Arthur, principal of Rocky View, it was a learning experience for herself as well as fun and hopes next year will be bigger.

“We’re very fortunate to have Mr. Joe here to help us out, and I’m learning a lot from our students more than anything,” Arthur said. “Everyone had a good time and it was fun. Next year we would love to bring in more dancers, storytellers, and make it even a little bigger.”

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