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Mendota Elementary students participate in crime lab science residency

(Mendota Heights, Minn.) --- Mendota Elementary School in District 197 hosted two scientists last week from the Science Museum of Minnesota who lead a crime lab science residency on February 2-5. The purpose of the crime lab science residency is to apply problem-solving skills and scientific processes to solve a fictional crime. At the opening all-grade assembly, the residents introduced a crime with four suspects that the students worked all week to solve using the various crime lab skills they were learning.



Blake Krisko stamps his fingers to make prints

In addition to two assembly presentations, each classroom got two sessions with a resident throughout the week. The students learned different techniques in forensic science to analyze evidence and reason out whom they believe committed the crime. Different classroom sessions included labs on chemical analysis, chromatography, hand righting, hairs and fibers, tracking down tracks, and fingerprinting.

“We use science to answer questions, and tie it in to the real world,” explains resident Sue Meyer. “Students love the hands-on activities, and it gives them a chance to use science tools, methodology, and analytical skills to solve problems.”

Mrs. Weisbecker’s third and fourth grade class’s last session was on fingerprinting. The students got to look at each other’s fingerprints over a projector as well as print their own fingers and examine them with microscopes. They learned how to dust for prints, lift them, and how to identify similarities and differences in individual fingerprints.

This PTA funded residency was an excellent opportunity for the Mendota students to learn how to apply science in real life situations. “The kids really got in to it and have enjoyed the entire process,” says Principal Steven Goldade. “It gave them a chance to use higher level thinking skills and to experience a side of science that they typically wouldn’t see.”



Carmen Chavez examines her fingerprints

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