

Kid's KOrner

Project Helps Promote Pa. 4-H Week

Lititz Fourth Graders Watch Growing Chicks Rock 'N Roll

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff
LITITZ (Lancaster Co.) — Did you know that a growing chick can "rock 'n roll" inside an egg?

Just ask Katelyn Williams, 10, in the fourth grade at Lititz Elementary. She'll tell you. If you hold an incubated egg to a real strong source of light, you can see it move. Often you can see its heart beating. You can see veins.

You can even see it move around so fast that it looks like it's rock 'n rolling, said Katelyn.

For the past several weeks, Mr. Jerry McKonly's fourth grade class at Lititz Elementary School has been learning the science called "embryology." Embryology is a branch of biology that looks into what makes an embryo, or egg, start, develop, grow, and finally hatch. It's one of the projects supported by the Lancaster 4-H program, which celebrates Pennsylvania 4-H Week next week.

Part of learning embryology involves taking 20-day eggs, incubating them (keeping them warm in a special growing box), turning them at the right times, and preparing for the day when the little chicks break through the eggshell and start their life as baby chicks.

"Embryology teaches the kids just how fragile life is," said McKonly. The fourth grade teacher said that, recently, because of an error in keeping the temperature monitored, the class lost a "hatch."

"The kids were just devastated," said McKonly. But new eggs were brought in early this week and put in the incubator.

In the project, coordinated through the county 4-H program, 100 students in four classes are involved. The students have to keep records of the eggs, when they were brought in, the temperatures in the incubator, when they were moved, and other items. Two

students are assigned to one egg — and they mark the egg on one side with a name. The other side is marked with a few dots. McKonly said this method helps in keeping track of how the egg is turned.

A first batch of eggs hatched recently. The chicks were put on a special feed supplied by the county 4-H program.

The county 4-H also supplies a video which talks about the 4-H program and how kids can get involved.

The students also study posters and other learning materials that explain the components of an egg, how the egg develops, and all the biological processes involved until the egg is hatched. Also, the fourth graders are quizzed on what they learn. They often go on field trips — last year they toured Sauder's Egg Plant and visited a nearby layer farm.

McKonly said many of the things he learned also for the first time, when the project began, about exactly what makes up the egg.

One of the "tests" the class conducted on the eggs was the candling process. A light is beamed through the egg and the students look inside to see the chick growing.

Keeping track of which bird is which is easy, with the names on the sides of the eggs. But once the chicks hatch, the students devised a way to keep track of the chicks, which are special to them.

For instance, Emmitt Smith, you know, named after the Cowboy, has a red mark on its leg. Valentine has a black mark. And Fuzz Ball has a blue mark.

"There's a special way to hold them, though," said Monica Kline, who delicately held up Fuzz Ball for all to see.

All photos by
Andy Andrews



Which chick is Emmitt Smith? It looks like the chick held by Anatoly Rymarenk, far right. From left, Monica Kline, 9, holding Fuzz Ball; Karri Graybill, 10, holding Valentine; Andy Frymyer, 10; and Rymarenk.

'Entertaining Is Something I Can Do'

LINDA WILLIAMS

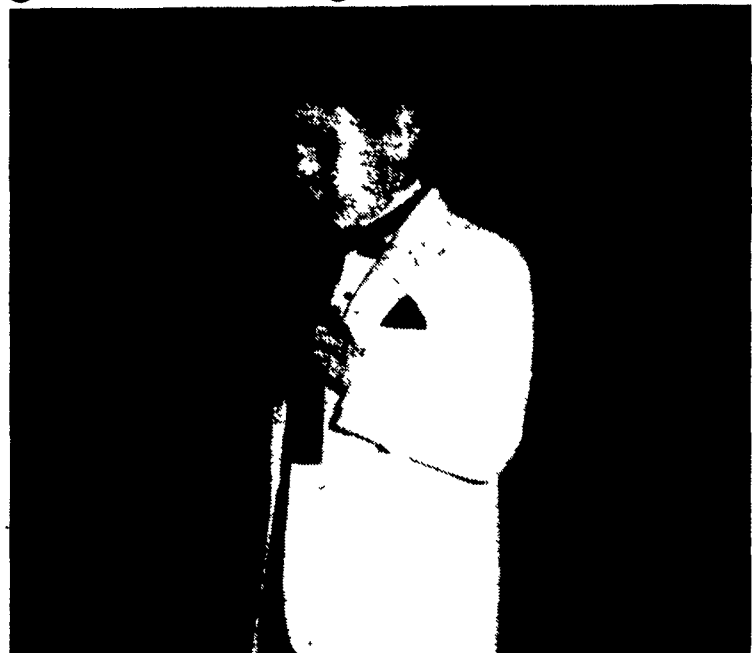
Bedford Co. Correspondent
EVERETT (Bedford Co.) — Nine-year-old Matthew Volbrecht has been wowing audiences all over Bedford County with his outstanding singing voice.

As most children have learned, learning the words to a song is not always easy. It usually requires a great deal of concentration, reading, rereading, singing, and re-singing until the entire song is memorized.

But the task is even more difficult for Matthew. He cannot pick up a paper and learn the words because he is blind.

Matthew likes to copy such stars as Barbara Streisand, because, he said, "As young as I am, her voice range is about the same as mine."

Several times, Matthew has appeared on the Al Albert Show, a



Matthew Volbrecht performs at the Bedford Co. extension banquet.

local television show produced in Philadelphia. "They always tell me I am the best singer they have," he said, smiling.

At home in Bedford County, Matthew has appeared at social functions all over the county. He sings for fund-raising events and was the special guest at the Bedford County extension banquet held recently at the Bedford Church of the Brethren.

This young man also plays the piano and organ, but says he doesn't do it as a part of his entertaining act as yet, because, "I still can't reach the pedals," he said.

A third grade student at Everett Elementary, Matthew is an honor student and enjoys playing with other children when possible. "Being blind leaves out a lot of games children normally play," says his mother.

A lot of his schoolwork is done on the computer using a special program designed for those who do not have sight.

This past summer, Matthew cut his own singing tape which he

sells at the functions where he entertains.

"All of the money is put into a trust fund for me and I will eventually use it to study music in college," Matthew said.

He does not have a fee for his entertaining, but said, "Many of the people choose to give me something and I am always quite grateful."

Matthew was not always blind. At the age of three, he developed a rare condition which caused the retina (the back of the eye) to crumble and fall apart. "It fell apart just like a piece of paper," his mother said.

The retina would act much like a movie screen. What we see is projected there and is transposed to our brains, causing us to see. There are no operations in 1993 that would help Matthew.

Matthew thinks he might like to continue being a musical entertainer when he grows up. "There aren't a lot of things a blind person can do," he said. "Entertaining is something I can do."



Lititz fourth graders Andrew Hess, 9; Katelyn Williams, 10; and Nolan Wealand, 9 "candle" the egg with the help of teacher Mr. Jerry McKonly.