

Kids Korner

Third Graders See That 'Rain Forest' Contains Many Household Plants

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ELVERSON (Chester Co.) —
"Have any of you been there yet?"

Melissa Makris, Twin Valley FFA member, looked over the group of third graders from Honey Brook, asking them if they'd ever been to the (slowly dwindling) rain forests of South America.

None raised their hands.

Then Melissa asked them, "Did you see *our* rain forest yet?"

The tour group from Mrs. Lana Rodgers' third grade class hadn't yet visited the greenhouse at Twin Valley, host to about 18 different types of rain forest plants.

When the group finally did make it into the sunny, steamy room, some were surprised. One pointed to a leafy, thick plant.

"What's that?" a third grader from Mrs. Ellie Wolf's class asked.

"A coffee plant," said Erica Lindberg, a sophomore at Twin Valley. Erica spoke to the third graders about the many plant types grown at the greenhouse.

A few of the children recognized the plants as some that are grown at home.

"Many of the common plants we have in the home are another type of thing we get from the rain forest that we don't know about," said Renee Frederick. Common plants include fuchsia, the spider plant, ferns, bougainvillea, and many others.

Along with husband Ron Frederick, ag science teacher at Twin Valley, and a host of Twin Valley FFA members, Renee assisted in the day-long FFA Food For America activities recently.

In all, about 243 third graders from Robeson, Twin Valley Elementary, and Honey Brook toured the ag science exhibits at the school.

The exhibits were arranged in eight "centers," including a greenhouse; reptiles, amphibians, and fish; woodworking; an animal petting zoo; a groundwater workshop; and birds.

Also included were the rain forest and food science center.

At the food science center, third graders were shown how to make ice cream by hand.

Outside, Lura Blosenski, freshman at Twin Valley, showed two polled Dorset sheep, each about seven months old. Their names



Amber Baldwin, 9, from Mrs. Rodgers' class, helped milk Leena the cow. Amber is the daughter of Leslie and David Baldwin, Honey Brook.

were Daisy and Maggie. Third graders had a chance to see what raw wool feels like.

Lura said it takes about two sheep that age and size to make a sweater.

Andy Risbon, Twin Valley senior, helped the third graders hammer together a wooden bird house.

Adrienne Neff, junior, and Mark Wright, freshman, provided a groundwater demonstration to show how well water can become contaminated.

Mike and Sandy Reed from Pike's Edge Farm in Birdsboro brought along Leena, a 4-year-old registered Holstein cow. With help from Mike, Amber Baldwin, 9, from Mrs. Rodgers' class, helped milk the cow. Amber is the daughter of Leslie and David Baldwin, Honey Brook.

Denetra Gerberich, senior, showed children from Mrs. Ellie Wolf's third grade class how to feed and care for catfish.

Melissa Kegerise, sophomore, spoke about the many different birds found in a rain forest.

Michelle Jacobs, senior, showed the third graders her corn snake, a native Pennsylvania reptile. It tried to make its way to "food" — a small rat.

Throughout the day, third graders came in also to view where food comes from and take home with them some rain forest plants grown in a greenhouse.

All photos by
Andy Andrews



Denetra Gerberich, senior, showed children from Mrs. Ellie Wolf's third grade class how to feed and care for catfish.



Erica Lindberg, a sophomore at Twin Valley, spoke to the third graders about the many plant types grown at the greenhouse. Here, she holds up a coffee plant.



Lura Blosenski, freshman at Twin Valley, showed two polled Dorset sheep, each about seven months old. Their names were Daisy and Maggie. Third graders had a chance to see what raw wool feels like.



Michelle Jacobs, senior, holds onto her corn snake, a native Pennsylvania reptile, as it tries to make its way to "food" — a small rat.