



Paradise Independent School District

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August 28, 2014

Dear Honorable Judge Hughes,

The purpose of this letter is to express Paradise ISD's appreciation for the outstanding programs supplied by the Texas AgriLife Extension Office. Andrea Calabretta was a part of our planning team as we embarked upon a first time hands-on field learning experience for our students. Her ideas, experience, and enthusiasm sparked wonderful ideas that served as the foundation for most of our stations. Ms. Calabretta conducted the lesson on plant identification and gave the students some background on the 4-H program; its meaning, and the various areas students can be involved.

The "Trails 4 Success" outdoor learning day for Paradise Elementary second and third graders was held on April 24th at the Sid Richardson Boy Scout Ranch on Lake Bridgeport. This day, though windy, far exceeded all our expectations. Besides Ms. Calabretta's plant identification station, the students visited and participated in activities at five other learning stations on ant characteristics and their habitats; solar heat; birds of this area; survival food chain game; and the watershed demonstration trailer. Students also took a discovery hike, picnicked, watched as our flags were posted, and sang camp songs.

Mr. Todd Vineyard, Wise County Extension Agent, also made a huge impact on the students with his demonstration at the watershed trailer. He brought the trailer to the site, and utilized the model at his station. Students were eager and surprised to learn they were standing on a watershed. They received information on how runoff works and how pollutants affect the water supply during the runoff from rains. The model demonstrated how trash and debris ends up in our streams and lakes.

It was a day that many students wished could have extended long into the evening. However, the teachers, parent volunteers, and Paradise PALs were weary, yet pleased, as the happy campers loaded the buses for the trek back to Paradise. The planning for the second "Trails 4 Success" has started and having Ms. Calabretta and Mr. Vineyard involved will ensure another day of learning at its best.

Sincerely yours,

Patti Seckman

Assistant Superintendent, Paradise ISD