

AREF-funded Innovative Projects grant activated in face of pandemic

Good Clean Learning initiative puts students in position to learn following COVID-19 closures

By apanian@leadertimes.com | on March 03, 2021
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Apollo-Ridge Middle School students gather around a black light, including (from left): Ashton Sample, Charity Miller, Isabelle Gaff, Celina St. Antoine and Sam Larson. Photos: Submitted

Last October, the Apollo Ridge Education Foundation (AREF) funded an Innovative Projects Grant, according to a release issued Tuesday by Cristine Kostiuk, Apollo-Ridge School District administrative assistant, community engagement, and AREF president.

Due to the closures created by the COVID-19 pandemic mandates, the students were just recently able to use the kits and perform the experiments enabled via the “Good Clean Learning” grant submitted by Ashley Jones, Apollo-Ridge Middle School Read 180 teacher, the release states.

“The project is so relevant and was a very innovative way to insert STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) into a reading lesson,” Kostiuk wrote in the release.



A-R Middle School students inspect for desk germs during the exercise, including (from left): Isabelle Gaff and Cassandra Shank.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The first scheduled workshop in the Read 180 Curriculum is titled “Contagion” and features nonfiction articles about past pandemics, excerpts from CDC documents, and a career focus on epidemiologists, the release states.

“The workshop takes place every two years and was extremely relevant this school year. In order to help the students contextualize

the lessons and transfer them into their daily lives, this project was implemented using GermGlo kits that help teach students proper hand-washing techniques, model the importance of PPE, and reinforce the importance of proper sanitation techniques,” Jones said.

The project will impact all Grade 7/8 Read 180 students for the next five-to-six years, the release states.

THE PROCESS

The experiment began by “infecting” the students in the front row with the GermGlo solution and then passing papers from one student to the next as usual, the release states.

“After watching and reviewing a video on handwashing the students used UV lights to look at their hands, desks, and the papers passed to the back row,” Jones said.



A-R Middle School student Dakoda Allman takes part in a desk-wiping exercise

The students discussed how the “germs” spread via contaminated objects, the release states.

“After all of the students’ hands were infected with the GermGlo solution they practiced cleaning them using appropriate handwashing techniques,” Jones said.

Using the UV light, the release states, the students were able to see where some of the solution remained and had the opportunity to go back and wash properly.

The next step was to use an aerosolized version of the GermGlo product to simulate a cough or sneeze, the release states. According to Jones, “Many students thought that masks were for protection not source control, so they didn’t think the mask would stop all of the germs.”

The students made predictions as to what would happen when the product was sprayed through a cloth mask and were shocked to see the mask’s effectiveness, the release states.

The students applied the GermGlo product to their desks and then washed them with water, the release states, and the students used the UV lights to see if all of the “germs” were removed.

“Many of the students did a great job but those who missed a few spots cleaned their desks until all the ‘germs’ were gone,” Kostiuk wrote.



A-R Middle School student Aliyah Crowell washes her hands during the exercise.

According to Jones, the students' favorite step was searching the classroom with the UV lights at the end of the period which revealed how the germs had spread to the sink, faucet, pencil sharpener, and other objects used during the experiment, the release states.

PROJECT EVALUATION

The students had such a great learning experience, the release states.

“They practiced hand washing, demonstrated how one infected object can spread germs to an entire class, learned about how masks function as source control, and practiced washing surfaces,” Jones said. “The students were amazed at how many germs they left behind when they washed their hands the first time and how far a sneeze or cough can go. They also didn’t realize that masks are source control and not protection.”