



Bienestar

Building housing, hope and futures

Beginning on April 16, 2010 an AKA Science (All Kids Are Scientists) class was offered to 3rd through 6th grade children at the Montebello Apartments in Hillsboro. AKA Science was developed and supported by the Oregon Health Career Center. The eight week curriculum was taught over a seven week period by Youth Coordinator Amanda Schuft. Program Coordinator Jorge Tello also helped teach one class. Before teaching the class, Schuft and Tello participated in a hands-on training at the OHCC offices in Wilsonville and taught the entire class once in Elm Park Apartments in Forest Grove.

AKA Science classes are comprised of hands-on activities that are fun and exciting for the children participating. The curriculum for AKA Science is designed to keep the children involved in scientific fields as they grow older by demonstrating how interesting and fun science and observation can be. A.K.A. Science uses a curriculum consistent with national science standards and reinforces the Oregon science content standards and benchmarks. AKA Science is an effective example of informal education that not only helps students meet benchmarks, but helps them to see science as something other than an academic pursuit.

The class taught at Montebello was titled The Physics of Light and Color. The experiments and activities taught the children about the color wheel, prisms, how light travels, the reflection and refraction of light, how their eyes work and interpret the world, magnification, optical illusions, and how to create moving pictures. Each class had a theme and began with a question to help the students recall their relevant knowledge. The classes then included multiple activities and experiments to help the students expand their understanding of the subject. The classes ended with a reflection question about what they had learned that day.





AKA Science has been very effective in teaching science to English Language Learners because students view the scientific concept through a hands-on activity before they are given a definition. It is common for ELL students to have trouble with reading comprehension; especially when a text includes a large amount of technical vocabulary.

AKA Science utilizes a different approach that does not involve reading from a text. After a group discussion,

the students saw a scientific concept through an activity in which they participated. Then the concept was explained to the students with basic vocabulary. Children could then talk about it with their own words without having read or memorized the definition; which is largely ineffective for students who struggle with reading comprehension.

The majority of the students in the Montebello AKA Science class can clearly explain the concept of refraction (change of direction of a ray of light, sound, heat, or the like, in passing obliquely from one medium into another in which its wave velocity is different) in their own words because they witnessed it and understand it. The concepts were recurring throughout the curriculum which helped the students learn them as well.

During this class Bienestar had the help of three different volunteers. A PCC volunteer helped to organize the class so it could be offered a second time, and assisted for one class. A regular Homework Club volunteer, Debi Myers, also came to assist. For three weeks a Catlin Gabel High School student who was doing her senior project with Bienestar assisted in the class.

The Oregon Health Career Center AKA Science Program Coordinator, Amanda Fan-Johansen, came to Montebello and observed a class. The Montebello AKA Science class was given great reviews by the OHCC. Johansen expressed interest in working on grants with Bienestar so AKA Science can be taught at more properties.

Classes were held every Friday in the community room at Montebello Apartments.



Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Schuft