

Students taste world with Enterprise City

By ROSEMARY MARTINEZ
Contributor

Parents and teachers describe Enterprise City as a simulation in economics, but the fourth-graders at Mary Immaculate Catholic School describe it with one emphatic word: fun.

Enterprise City is an innovative educational program designed to provide students with a hands-on opportunity to experience the challenges of entrepreneurship through role-playing simulations in a "mini-city." Although it is run by the Richardson Independent School District, students from Mary Immaculate School and other private schools take part in the program.

In the weeks prior to their trip to Enterprise City, students at Mary Immaculate study concepts such as scarcity economics, supply and demand, and entrepreneurship. They learn how to maintain a checkbook, apply for a business bank loan and manage resources. They study the steps involved in starting a business and how advertising plays a part in promoting the business.

In addition, they campaign and hold elections for the local government positions that will be put into practice at Enterprise City. Whether their role for the day is that of banker, D.J., photographer, salesperson or one of the many other positions, each student has an active function in the community.

"Even if we didn't get the job we wanted, everyone learned a lot about running a business,"



SUBMITTED PHOTO BY ROSEMARY MARTINEZ
Coppell resident Hank Bitterman served as mayor for the day during Mary Immaculate Catholic School's Enterprise City program.

said Hank Bitterman, a 10-year-old student from Coppell who served as mayor for the day. "And the key point is that we all had fun using things like check-writing that we can use in real life."

Once students arrive at the city, their skills and experiences expand, as they act as both producers and consumers while learning important life skills. They earn, loan, save and spend money as they make choices about how to price and market their inventory. Their goal is to run their shops so efficiently that they can repay their bank loan and make a profit by the end of the day.

"Through Enterprise City, our students put into practice what they have learned regarding the value of business and money," said Karen Montgomery, a Mary Immaculate fourth-grade teacher who coordinated the event. "And they are engaged in such an exciting manner that the concepts will stay with them forever."

Rosemary Martinez contributes to neighborsgo.com on behalf of Mary Immaculate School.