



Friends School students create Egyptian museum

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HARRISON TWP. Second-graders at the Friends School in Mullica Hill showed off projects and public speaking skills as they hosted their own museum.

The class has been studying the culture of ancient Egypt this year, from gods and burial rites to agriculture and building structures.

While learning, they have also been creating their own "artifacts" — dioramas, mummies, pyramids and papyrus — as well as writing poems and dictionaries reflecting Egypt.

"They absolutely love it. They're doing research on their own at home and doing projects at home," said second-grade teacher Kathy Saia.

Now at the end of their Egyptian studies, the students have amassed their collection and staged a two-classroom "museum" where they could educate their fellow students, as well as parents and visitors, about what they've learned all year.

Donning an Egyptian costume, 7-year-old Dylan Zallie, served as a tour guide on Friday. As she walked through mummified Barbie dolls and papier-mâché Canopic jars, she spoke of the Nile River and its importance to the farmers along its banks. She spoke of the weighing of the heart ceremony that ancient Egyptians believed determined the recently deceased's fate in the afterlife. And she sang a chanting song — "Tut, Tut, Tut" — about the boy king who has fascinated archeologists and lay persons alike.

The museum was designed not only to show off the students' hard work and what they've learned, but also as a way for them to practice the ever-important skill of speaking in public.

Students at the Friends School are expected to give a full speech to the entire population by the eighth grade, and projects like this, which the children do each year, are aimed at honing that skill.

"We're always trying to show off their public speaking skills and this is a way for them to do that and for them to share what they've done," Saia said. "They get to be our "expert tour-guides."

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