

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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HLES students honor veterans with iMovie biographies

For Hoffmann Lane Elementary School fourth grader Tyler Byers, this year's Veterans Day will be a memorable one as his father joined him for the school's morning ceremony honoring past and present members of the military.

"It's pretty cool to have him here with me," said Byers. "I'm really proud of him."

Tyler's father Joe Byers is a United States Army Chief Warrant Officer Four (CW4), and he said he was honored to be a part of the school's Veterans Day ceremony.

"It was a great ceremony," Joe said. "It's always special, too, when you can spend time with your son at school, especially for something as wonderful as this."

The school's choir sang the "Armed Forces Medley," the "National Anthem," and "America, I Give My Thanks To You." All HLES students waved American flags as the veterans entered the cafeteria for the ceremony.

Media presentations were also given during the ceremony by fourth grade SAGE (Significant Activities for Generating Excellence) students. The students each interviewed a family or friend that was a veteran and created a historical biography iMovie on the school's Mac laptops about the life of the veteran they interviewed.

HLES SAGE instructor Gena Orth said it was a great way for the students to relate to the significance of Veterans Day.

"I wanted them to make a connection between generations," she said. "I wanted them to connect to a real story of American history."

Prior to interviewing the veterans for their historical biographies project, the students studied American conflicts, the reasons why the wars were started and how things changed after the wars.

“This really enabled the students to better know how to interview their veterans and what questions to ask,” Orth said. “It helped them understand what they were hearing from their veterans, too.”

Although fourth grade SAGE student Shelby McGrath never knew her grandfather who fought in World War II, she still wanted to tell about his life at war. So, she interviewed her aunt, mother and grandmother for the iMovie, and she said she learned a lot about her grandfather.

“I learned about how he changed while he was in the military,” McGrath said. “Because of the concentration camps, my grandmother told me he had nightmares until the day he died. He was also more disciplined, too, because of the military.”

McGrath said she wished she could have personally interviewed her grandfather but said she’s happy that people will know about him now because of her historical biography on him.

“I’m really happy I had the chance to do this,” she said. “He helped rebuild roads and bridges in World War II and he became a cook. I want people to know that.”

Campuses across Comal ISD honored veterans on Veterans Day with ceremonies and performances, and McGrath said it felt good to honor the veterans who came to HLES.

“I’m happy to honor them because of how they fought for our country,” she said. “They risked their lives to save us.”