

# Students get a lesson in tolerance



Two students find out what its like to be visually impaired as one of them tries to put together a jigsaw puzzle blindfolded. Photo by Mike McHone.

By Mike McHone  
Herald Writer

SYLVANIA — While most of us were starting to celebrate St. Patrick's Day on March 17th, the kids at Timberstone school were learning a lesson. Besides the typical lessons in math, English, science, and social studies, they were learning quite possibly one of the most important lessons a human being could ever learn: Tolerance and acceptance.

March is Mental Retardation Awareness Month, and the people of the Anne Grady Center came to Timberstone to show some of the students what it is like to live, day to day, with a handicap. This is the fourth year in a row that the Center has come to Timberstone.

The Anne Grady Center, begun in conjunction with the Anne Grady Corporation, has helped area residents with disabilities since 1976. Derek Hughes and Sharon Unkle of the Center were the representatives at Timberstone.

Dee Davie, a health and physical education teacher at Timberstone, was on hand to help with the presentations and activities, along with fellow Phys. Ed. Teacher Jack Fry.

All of the activities, Davie said, are preformed so that "the students can gain a better understanding of what it might be like to have a disability."

Some of the activities included learning sign language, wheel chair races, a blind station (where a student is blindfolded and has to put together a jigsaw puzzle with the help of another student's vocal instructions), and an eating station.

"Some people have difficulty in

swallowing," Davie said. For the "eating station," students were given very small cups of water that were mixed with a thick, gelatin-like solution that tasted, in all honesty, somewhat horrible. The thick water and the bad taste proved to kids how hard such a simple task as eating could be struggle for someone without the proper faculties.

"There was one sixth grader who liked it," Davie said with a laugh.

Most of the children found learn-

ing sign language fun. They also found the blind puzzle challenge interesting as well. But the real fun came during the wheel chair races.

One child would sit in the chair while another child pushed them along a set up obstacle course in the gym. However, the kid pushing the chair had to hop on one foot, or only push the chair with one had. A good time was had (especially if someone ran over an orange cone, or nearly collided with the wall), but, once again, it showed the children that wheel chairs aren't easy to operate.

These lessons will most likely live with the students at Timberstone for quite sometime.

"A line in our motto says, 'treat others the way I want to be treated,'" Davie said. That was the focus; that was the goal. And it's something that not only the students can learn from, but every single one of us as well.

For more information on the Anne Grady Center, visit [www.annegrady.org](http://www.annegrady.org)

**The Timberstone Wolves "I Will" pledge:**

I will not tease, threaten, or harm others.

I will not start or spread rumors.

I will treat others the way I want to be treated.

I will look for the good in other people.

I will not do what is popular, but what is right.

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