Appendix A

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Wood magic amazes children

by Tiffany Hoffman
Managing Editor

The Virginia Tech department of wood science and forest products branched out to local elementary school students this week with their sixth annual wood magic show held yesterday at Brooks Forest Products Center across from the Blacksburg Airport.

The program catered to 672 students and teachers with different stations where they made paper, planted seeds, tested the strength of wood and blew bubbles with pieces of oak trees in addition to seven other events.

“(The children) learn the value of utilizing the forest for products we rely on every day,” said Audrey Zink-Sharp, director of wood magic and an associate professor in the department of wood science and forest products.

Zink-Sharp said she got the idea for wood magic from Mississippi State University and was amazed with the enthusiasm of the children.

“I was amazed what we could do with and for the children,” she said. “So I wanted to do that for Virginia Tech and for Virginia students.”

Zink-Sharp said the number of participants in the program has doubled since the first year and said the waiting list for next year’s events has already been started.

“I think it’s good for kids when they’re young to be exposed to Virginia Tech — more than just football,” said Holly Meyer, a fourth-grade teacher at Dayspring Christian School.

The students spent between 15 and 30 minutes at each station and some said planting seeds and papermaking were their favorites.

“We talk about seeds and how important it is for us to regrow trees after we cut them and use them,” said Shawn Baker, an extension associate in forestry.

He said each student got a chance to take one acorn seed and put it in a cup with dirt to take back and plant.

“Planting trees was my favorite because we could plant our trees and see them grow,” said Konner Kenley, a fifth-grader at Christiansburg Elementary School.

Taylor Whitaker, also a fifth-grader at Christiansburg Elementary, said she liked papermaking.

“I heard about it from other friends and I looked forward to papermaking,” she said.

Ralph Rupert, a research associate.

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Magic: Program displays fun associated with different majors

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School fifth-grader, said she enjoyed the three-hour event because she got to learn about wood, but the elementary school students weren’t the only ones who enjoyed the day for its access to knowledge.

“I like the simplicity of it,” said graduate student Patrick Rappold. “I spend a lot of time in school learning about wood, and sometimes I learn more from doing this stuff than from classes.

“(This program) also shows that college is fun and there are a lot of different majors, like wood science.”