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Weather Stations Connect Kids Globally

What's a better way to get kids connected to the rest of the world than by doing it for educational purposes? Doing it for the environment at the same time! This type of thinking is what led the Tech₂O Center to acquire two GLOBE weather stations to research the dynamics of the Earth's environment.

The Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) program is a worldwide, pro-active, primary and secondary school-based education program. Students, teachers and scientists collaborate on inquiry-based investigations of the environment on a global scale.

What began on Earth Day in 1995 as a delicate flower has blossomed into an international network of 111 participating countries. Over 1.5 million students have participated in GLOBE, contributing more than 21 million measurements to the database, which is then used in their science projects.

Global Value

"It gives them more of a global value," Water Conservation Technician Virginia Galarza said. "The value of GLOBE is collecting scientific data for your local environment with a focus on atmosphere, water, soil and land cover."

Weather stations are equipped with two sensors. One takes temperature readings of the atmosphere; the other takes temperature readings of the soil. Students use the weather stations to collaborate with people on the other side of the world and share data via the Internet. They record data, do research, and then create reports, maps and graphs, all of which are interactive on the website.

As a resource center, Tech₂O wanted to acquire weather stations because they're additional learning tools. Once you're part of the GLOBE Network, you can access all of the data that is there.

"So we can look at the data from Uruguay or Argentina," said Water Conservation Technician Ruth Rodriguez. "And if we're teaching kids we can say, okay, this is what we've got here, and on the other side of the hemisphere, this is what's going on."



Installing the weather stations was a Service Project for Fox Bolduc (center), son of Business and Customer Service Manager Mark Bolduc. Fox recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout. He is a Life Scout and Patrol Leader in Boy Scout Troop 429 and a member of the Order of the Arrow and the Honor Society of Boy Scouts.

Real Life Scientists

Students have the opportunity to become real life scientists when taking readings from the weather stations, giving them a better overall understanding of what's going on throughout the world. It all ties into what students are learning about at Tech₂O, managing water in the desert.

"It gives them a better sense of awareness," Galarza said. "Not only that, but it gives them an appreciation in knowing where their water comes from, how it travels and how the climate and weather affect everything."

The Tech₂O Center eventually plans to have visitors attend workshops and afterwards go into the field to take the readings and collect the data.

"In essence, they'll have a research center to come and do research," Galarza said. "It's available and it's on our lot. They can either come on Saturdays, or they can schedule something for us to help them with."

— Edward Sias

Hundreds Attend Water Festival

The Tech₂O Center hosted its annual Water Festival during the last week in October. The four-day event provided learning and hands-on experiences for all who attended. Approximately 950 fourth and fifth graders and their 50 teachers visited Tech₂O during the first three days of the festival. The Community Water Festival, held Saturday, Oct. 30, was attended by 150 kids and adults.

Attendees learned about recycling, geology and ancient artifacts, as well as Chihuahuan Desert animal tracks and furs. Young scientists learned about water quality, treatment and analysis, while junior chefs used ice cream, crumbled cookies, Sprite and sprinkles to build delicious, but gross-looking, edible aquifers. Budding artists created personal desert critters, and everyone enjoyed the games.

Other popular destinations included the interactive Rolling River, which demonstrates the effects of