

Inside information: Bibb students learn about human body through walking exhibit

By ANDREA CASTILLO - acastillo@macon.com

Entering one ear and climbing out the other, Burdell-Hunt Elementary School students learned about the human body through an interactive exhibit in their gymnasium Wednesday.

With the hands-on approach, teachers and community partners hope students will remember those lessons for a long time afterward.



JASON VORHEES/THE TELEGRAPH Students walk in and out of a tent shaped like a head while learning about the brain Wednesday during a traveling 10-station Body Walk exhibit at Burdell-Hunt Elementary School.

Students began the Body Walk tours with a lesson on the brain inside a walk-through model of a head. Moving from the brain exhibit to the mouth, a group of about 10 second-graders sat on chairs shaped like teeth.

As Burdell-Hunt reading tutor Gail Ford talked about the mouth's role in the digestion process, she asked the students, "How many of you like soda?"

Almost all of them raised their hands. As they found out a 20-ounce serving has almost 17 teaspoons of sugar, some of the second-graders gasped, while others stayed silent with wide eyes and open mouths.

The exhibit gives school staff a chance to talk about health issues with the students they may not get to discuss in class, Ford said.

"I'm happy to know what they know," she said. "It's nice to see they are amazed and to make a difference knowing that."

Burdell-Hunt will host the Body Walk tours through Thursday, with 10 stations exploring parts of the body such as the heart, stomach, lungs and skin. Students at Jones Elementary School had the chance to visit the Body Walk exhibit Monday and Tuesday.

The exhibit is part of a three-year initiative to improve health among students at Burdell-Hunt, along with Jones, King-Danforth and Bernd elementary schools.

Not only does the exhibit engage students, but it also raises the health consciousness of adults around them, said Burdell-Hunt principal Tanya Allen.

"It gives students real-life applications of things," Allen said. "Not only that, it helps them understand how each part (of the body) is connected."



JASON VORHEES/THE TELEGRAPH Burdell-Hunt Elementary School writing teacher Sharon Homer, right, and students act like they are putting on sunscreen while Homer talks about the importance of our skin during a traveling 10-station Body Walk exhibit Wednesday in the school's gymnasium.

The exhibit has made its way to about 75 schools in the state, said Mary Kate Chapman, project leader for HealthMPowers, the organization that put the exhibit together.



JASON VORHEES/THE TELEGRAPH Parent volunteer Cynthia Baldwin talks to students about the heart during a traveling 10-station Body Walk Exhibit Wednesday at Burdell-Hunt Elementary

Georgia has the second-highest rate of childhood obesity in the country, but Chapman sees that as an opportunity to bring awareness to health and nutrition issues.

“It sets the catalyst in place in making changes to equip and empower children to make healthy choices in life,” Chapman said.

To contact writer Andrea Castillo, call 744-4331.

For more information about HealthMPowers call 770-817-1733.