

## City Staff Gives Students Life Lessons in Real World

The City of Brentwood went to school on Halloween. Not to Trick-or-Treat, but to Trick-and-Teach.

Representatives of Brentwood's Police, Public Works and Recreation departments joined staff members of the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District to teach youngsters at Ron Nunn Elementary School water conservation, crime scene investigation and the salmon's spawning journey.

Recreation staffer Barry Margesson teamed with Mary Grim from the resource district on the salmon run. Students participating in the school's Science Day activities took turns being young salmon encountering predators and obstacles along their journey to a spawning site in the Marsh Creek watershed.

"When salmon are small there are hazards from poor water quality to too much sediment or too many chemicals. There were displays of clean water and various types of compromised water for kids to view," says Grim.

Predators that exist in the Marsh Creek watershed, such as blue herons, otters and anglers, were simulated by other students (some of whom wore signs identifying them as fishermen) who chased and tagged the young salmon. The object was to teach students, interactively, about how salmon encounter predators on their way to spawn in Marsh Creek.

Youngsters jumped over sprinklers to simulate waterfalls and fish ladders. They crawled through boxes to simulate culverts, sometimes being forced to wait just like real salmon must when the water level is too low to navigate the culverts.

Michele Keady, a community service officer who does crime scene work for the Brentwood Police Department, demonstrated how investigators look for clues and evidence at crime scenes.

Keady let the students pour plaster into a footprint to make a mold and then demonstrated on a computer how investigators would attempt to find a shoe that



— Public Works Department Photo

**City Wastewater Laboratory Technician Kyle Anderson shows students a beaker with treated wastewater and another with tap water.**

matched the print at the scene.

Students were fingerprinted, shown how various types of surfaces will leave fingerprints and the types of material used to find those fingerprints. They even got to leave their fingerprints in Silly Putty.

A pumpkin was used to demonstrate how different tools leave different marks. Students poked the pumpkin with scissors, a knife, screwdriver, a skewer and a fork and were asked to examine the differences in their marks.

Keady said it was the first time the department ever had been invited to participate in such an event.

"It gave the kids a lot of positive interaction with our department," she says.

The City's Public Works Department provided three displays: one from the Water Division, another from the Waste-

water Division and a third from the Solid Waste Division.

At the groundwater exhibit, Water Reclamation Specialist Diana Williford showed how water flows underground through the water table and how pesticides, fertilizers and other substances that are placed in or on the ground can affect that water.

City Wastewater Laboratory Technician Kyle Anderson worked behind the Wastewater display, showing students how sewage can be treated to produce clean water.

Meanwhile, Kelly Warren of the Public Works Department taught pupils about composting as they put organic waste into a box full of worms. She also showed them what can go into curbside recycling carts.

### ***Solid Waste Disposal, Recycling Guide for 2007***

The City of Brentwood's Solid Waste Division recently distributed its 2007 Service Guide with information about garbage disposal and recycling.

Any household that did not receive a guide should call the Solid Waste Division at (925) 516-6090.

Meanwhile, Contra Costa County's

updated recycling guide is available online at [www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/department/cd/Guide.pdf](http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/department/cd/Guide.pdf).

The county's guide no longer appears as an insert in telephone directories. Instead, residents will find a small display ad listing the website and recycling hotline, 1-800-750-4096.