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ODESSA AMERICAN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2018

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Help is needed for happy holidays

The 24th year of the Empty Stocking Fund continues with a \$100,000 goal that won't be met without you. Funds stay in Ector County and go to help needy families like that of struggling single dad Paul, not his real name, who recently had his hours cut and is struggling to make ends meet for his family. Paul and his family can be helped through the Empty Stocking Fund, an annual fundraising effort by the Odessa American and The Salvation Army. Empty Stocking Funds go for a good holiday meal and small gifts under the tree.

Donations to the Empty Stocking Fund may be mailed or delivered to the Salvation Army Community Center, 810 E. 11th St., or the Odessa American, 222 E. Fourth St. ZIP codes for both are 79761. Call the Salvation Army at 332-0738.

The Empty Stocking Fund was created by the Odessa American in 1995 and has raised more than \$1.8 million. New this year is a button to donate online at tinyurl.com/ybgnwnzw.

ON THE NET

» tinyurl.com/ybgnwnzw

Christmas at the Mansion

Museum of the Southwest, 1705 W. Missouri Ave., Midland, has scheduled Christmas at the Mansion through Dec. 14.

Today: 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., Gingerbread Workshop.

Wednesday: 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., ReinBeer VIII.

Dec. 8: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Christmas at the Mansion Open House.

Dec. 8: 11 a.m., Ugly Christmas Sweater Run.

Dec. 11: Noon, Christmas Luncheon.

Dec. 14: 3 p.m. to 4:15 p.m., Holiday Tea Party.

Odessa American moving offices

BY PAUL WEDDING
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The Odessa American moved into a new building Friday, leaving behind its old building where the paper has been a mainstay for nearly 70 years.

The OA's new location will be on the second floor of the Southwest Office Building, 4001 E. 42nd St., next to Fast Eddie's Billiards.

"This move is bittersweet," OA Publisher Pat Canty said. "We are leaving behind a lot

of history and memories made in a building we have occupied for decades. But we are truly excited to be moving into our new home, where we look forward to making new, great memories."

The OA has been located in its current building at 222 E. Fourth St. since 1951.

"Our new offices are more modern and a much better fit for our needs in a news media landscape in which technology requires less space," Canty said.

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A view of the Odessa American's new newspaper office at 4001 42nd Street. The OA will be located on the second floor.

JACOB FORD | ODESSA AMERICAN

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK



From left, Kim Moreno and Zaylia Jordan, both 7-years-old, classify their shark teeth. Hays Magnet Elementary School first grade teacher Sydney Garcia has her students study and classify shark teeth that she found in a creek bed near Sherman, Texas.

MARK ROGERS | ODESSA AMERICAN

Teachers dig professional development trip

BY RUTH CAMPBELL
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A group of teachers from across Ector County Independent School District got to step out of the classroom and into the field as part of a professional development field trip to the Dallas area.

The trip, which ran from Nov. 13 through Nov. 17, stemmed from a visit by anatomist Joy Reidenberg earlier in November. Teachers got to know

Reidenberg better, along and other paleontologists and scientists as they dug for fossils.

The 12 teachers also visited the Perot Museum of Nature and Science where they got an exclusive tour of their bio lab, as well as fossil prep room, ECISD Chief Innovation Officer Jason Osborne said.

The trip, along with Reidenberg's visit, was sponsored by a PICK Education grant from Chevron, Osborne said in an email.



» PICK Education: tinyurl.com/ydfxzszv
» Perot Museum of Nature and Science: perotmuseum.org

"The teachers selected were from across the district and most met for the first time as we loaded up in vehicles. They also have various backgrounds

such as science, reading, math and AVID. We want to create partnerships and friendships around the district through these authentic teacher professional development field trips. We want to break down silos between campuses and ignite new ideas and collaborations and sharing information between classrooms. The teachers now have new ideas and methods to use in their classroom making student learning

more tangible and the curriculum comes to life," Osborne said.

LBJ Elementary School gifted and talented teacher Vanessa Brower said she and her colleagues explored open country on private land, with permission of the landowner. The landowner showed them where fossils had been found in the past and gave them free reign to use their tools to find their own artifacts.

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Trip

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They found shark teeth, clams, ammonites and other fossils, Brower said.

"Apparently our state was covered with water and a lot of creeks and gullies where these little animals would live, so we were able to go down riverbeds and climb through river bottoms and just dig for ourselves," Brower said.

"When you're doing it with paleontologists and people who are experts in the field of anatomy, people who have studied these things their whole lives, you bring an entirely different level of learning to the experience. Just being with them and hearing them talk about what we were finding, what we were looking for was just an amazing experience," she added. "I'm really so blessed to be a part of that."

Being a gifted specialist, Brower said she gets to see gifted children from the beginning, but it was interesting to see the adult versions and how their lives had gone.

She said they were able to bring what they found back with them to show their students.

"Those are things I can't buy. That is something that is unique to our district and to the PICK Education experience. It's just invaluable to me and my students. ... It was amazing experience," Brower said.

Shelly Madrid, a second grade teacher at Reagan Magnet Elementary School, said she has no fossil background, other than her students wanting to know more about them.

"We were doing enrichment clusters here at the school and ... dinosaurs and fossils scored really high for our students," Madrid said.

Osborne talked to them about Sharkfinder, which

allows students to develop skills in science, math, geography and writing. Madrid decided to offer it as an enrichment cluster and the "kids went crazy for it. They just love it."

She decided to participate in the professional development so she could learn more and share it with her students.

"Then I really ended up enjoying it," Madrid said.

She added that with help from paleontologists, she developed an eye for what to look for and it was exciting.

Another benefit was being around other teachers and bouncing ideas off each other.

Evonne Marruffo, a fifth-grade science teacher at Burnet Elementary, said she thought the trip was a wonderful, motivating and encouraging experience.

Marruffo said it didn't matter how experienced the teachers were or where they came from, they learned from each other.

Having started teaching Sharkfinder last year when she was at Blackshear Elementary Magnet, she saw students realize there was a world beyond their neighborhood and their test scores.

She started letting the students use the scientific process to look at data, which are the fossils instead of teaching it to them.

A recent parent night saw buy-in from the adults as they worked side-by-side with their children.

"It really builds a community and family of children who want to discover and learn and families that want to discover and learn," Marruffo said.

Sydney Garcia, a first grade teacher at Hays STEAM Academy, said she'd never taken part in anything like the Dallas trip before and it was "actually really phenomenal."

"That was my first time getting to dig up any fossils, look for shark

teeth and I got to go to the Perot Museum for the first time. It was really eye opening and a really great experience for me," Garcia said.

Her students had participated in Sharkfinder and sent samples off to a scientist.

"Whenever we did Sharkfinder, that kind of sparked my interest more. Then the opportunity for this professional development gave me real-world, hands-on paleontology types of opportunity ...," Garcia said.

She added that since she's gotten more into paleontology, her students have, too.

Garcia said the experience gave her a chance to discover again and having to figure things out for herself. In turn, that gives her students a chance to explore and learn for themselves vs. just teaching them.

At their age, she said, her students always see themselves as scientists.

"They've already been asking me a lot of questions, and questions that I probably wouldn't have even thought of myself," Garcia said.

This past Monday, her students were using iPads to take photos and using Google Docs to classify all the shark's teeth she had found.

Kim Moreno, Jer'Naijah Glover and Brianna Thomas are three of Garcia's students. They really like sharks. Seeing the shark's teeth made them want to know more about sharks, ammonites, clams and other fossils.

Glover, 7, said they have been learning about shark's teeth and acting like scholars.

Moreno, 7, said she had never seen shark's teeth before.

"It was cool. The little teeth were the sharpest," 6-year-old Thomas said.

"I poked myself with one," Moreno said.