

Lincoln Classes Focusing On Math

Students at Lincoln Primary School will mark National Math Month with special math activity days planned for each grade level, starting with the kindergarten and first grade classes next week.

On April 10, parent volunteers will staff activity centers set up in the school gymnasium.

Individual classes will take their turn working through the centers, which will offer hands-on experiences in measuring, graphing, working with geometric patterns and "mental" math, among other topics, said Esther Smith, school spokesman.

Volunteers have already been at

work making the manipulatives and other materials needed for the program.

"The parents are really looking forward to it," she said. "They're real excited about it."

Second- and third-grade classes will participate in different math day programs later in the month.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

NEW BONDS ARE FORGED by these Brunswick County families and the foreign students who are spending a year with them. The American Field Service has brought together those pictured (from left) Dan Martin and Mike Martin, both of Sea Trail with Ben Hamilton from Australia, Jane Martin, Ben's host mother, Milena Jenkins from Costa Rica, and her host mother Nancy McDowell.

Reach Across The World And Find A New Family

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Tom and Nancy McDowell are a Shallotte Point couple who reared three sons and now have the daughter they've always wanted.

Melina Jenkins of San Jose, Costa Rica, with two sisters at home, now enjoys the fun of three big brothers.

The acquisition of new families by these people happened because of the American Field Service (AFS), an international program that enables high school students in America and abroad to spend a year in another country and experience another home life.

The McDowells, whose adult sons live in Charlotte, were surprised that they qualified to host a foreign student. "I thought there had to be a teenager in the home to send to another country as an exchange," Nancy said.

They chose Melina from a list of prospective exchange students and she chose them. They met last summer during an orientation week in Charlotte and she came to live with them in July. She is to return to Costa Rica on July 11.

For her part, Melina, a happy, dark-haired, 18-year-old beauty, is delighted to be part of a family of boys. "Now I have three brothers!" she exclaimed, saying she has spent time in Charlotte visiting the McDowell sons during her nine months in America.

This is not her first trip to the United States. "I visited relatives in New York five years ago," she said, groping slightly for the right words, but using correct, nearly unaccented English. Asked if North Carolina seemed different from that northern metropolis, she rolled her eyes and laughed, nodding in agreement.

Melina has fit comfortably into the school scene at West Brunswick High School, making the honor roll, learning American sports and meeting good-looking guys.

"Ohhhhh, yes!" she said in answer to a question about the prevalence of attractive young men. Pressed as to differences between Costa Rican and Brunswick County youth, she struggled to be diplomatic. "Back home, boys are...well, a little sweeter...warmer," she said.

As for classwork, Nancy said Melina's teachers "couldn't say enough good things about her. They were

amazed that she had so little trouble with the language and did so well in American history. They said she's just like a sponge."

Costa Rican schools are considerably different from West Brunswick, according to Melina. "Students must wear uniforms at school," she said, "and we study certain subjects one day, something else the next."

She was impressed with the high-tech equipment, such as computers, available to students, and with the intense interest Americans show in sports. Among her travels since last July, she remembers fondly a trip to Atlanta, "to see the Braves win!"

She's been skiing, too, an impossibility in Central America, fished from the McDowell's boat ("and I caught one!" she reported excitedly), and has traveled with the McDowells to Wilson every six weeks for progress meetings of AFS.

"They get families and students together to discuss problems they've had," Nancy said. "Melina and I looked at each other after the first meeting and said, 'There must be something wrong with us. We haven't had any problems.'"

They confessed to initial nervousness on both parts, but the girl has become an integral part of the family. "We look at her as our daughter," Nancy said, hugging Melina. "When she's out on a date, I sit up and wait and worry about her."

Melina did not even admit to much homesickness, though she calls her Costa Rican family every two weeks. "I have my family here!" she said.

The McDowell's enthusiastically recommend hosting foreign students through AFS. "It's just a wonderful experience," Nancy said. "We certainly intend to visit Costa Rica in the future and Melina will come back to visit us. We have a new daughter."

Beth Pupp, Spanish teacher at West Brunswick High School, was the liaison between AFS and the McDowells, also arranging for Australian teenager Ben Hamilton to be placed in the Sea Trail home of Tony and Jane Martin.

She said the organization became visible in this county just last year. Anyone interested in more information about the program can write to her at P.O. Box 1624, Shallotte, N.C. 28459.

Phone Service Cut Again

More than 9,000 telephone customers in southwestern Brunswick County were left without service for a few hours Tuesday following another accidental cable cut.

Customers in the Seaside and Longwood exchanges couldn't make or receive outside local or long-distance calls from 1:20 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. Tuesday, according to Russell Price, general manager of Atlantic Telephone Membership Corp.

Price said a contractor hired by

Brunswick Electric Membership Corp. to install concrete utility poles along U.S. 17 south of Shallotte cut a cable Tuesday afternoon.

The crew was working just north of Holden Brother's Produce on the east side of U.S. 17 when it cut the "T-screen" cable that connects the Seaside and Longwood exchanges with the rest of the world.

Price said the Seaside exchange is Atlantic Telephone's largest with about 8,000 customers. It includes Ocean Isle Beach, Sunset Beach and

Calabash. There are about 1,300 customers in the Longwood exchange.

Tuesday marked the third time in the last three weeks that area residents have had their phone service interrupted by accidental cuts along U.S. 17.

Long distance telephone service was cut off for several hours March 31 when a contractor broke a Southern Bell cable in northern Brunswick County.

The same contractor that caused the problem this week was blamed for cutting an Atlantic Telephone cable near Supply on March 16.

"It's sure frustrating for our customers to continue experiencing these things," Price said Tuesday.

The ATMC manager expects more problems as contractors continue work relating to the four-laning of U.S. 17 through Brunswick County.

"The scope of the project is just so big and so broad and there's so much going on we just can't keep up with it all," Price said.

"I guess it's progress that we're experiencing here, but I think it's progress with a cost."



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