

SCHOOL NEWS

Operation Lifesaver train comes to Grover

EMILY WEAVER

eweaver@kingsmountainherald.com

A train came to Grover Elementary's playground on Monday and Tuesday. It was the NC Operation Lifesaver train's first visit to a Cleveland County School and it was met with great enthusiasm from the students.

Vivian Speight-Bridges, executive director for NCOL, said, "We are trying to teach the children safety around trains."

According to NCOL.org, there were 66 grade crossing collisions resulting in six fatalities and 33 injuries across the state in 2005. In the same year, data shows, there were also 31 reported incidents of trespassers on the tracks resulting in 18 fatalities and 13 injuries. "We are in the top 15 states in the nation in number of highway crossing collisions," Speight-Bridges said.

She added that a lot of times communities don't think about train safety. "But when you have a train running right through town that should be important," she said.

Classes, one at a time, filed into the playground. Each student was given a paper engineer cap they folded into shape and bracelets. But more importantly, they were given some valuable train safety information. Speight-Bridges told Ms. Brandi Edwards' class that trains can move very fast and when they are in motion, it can take "the length of 18 football fields for the train to come to a stop. Do you know how long a football field is?" she asked the class.

"Twenty million long miles," exclaimed Ethan Smith, with wide eyes.

"That's just about right," Speight-Bridges said.

In order to avoid railway crossing collisions, she taught them the important "watch words: look, listen and live." She told the children to shout it with her. "LOOK, LISTEN, LIVE."

She also told them that they should never go near the train tracks or play on the railways. She asked them what would happen if they were on the track when a train came. Another student said, "you'll die." For trespasser safety, she instructed them to "Stay off, stay away and stay alive."

After each class's lesson, she asked, "Now who wants to ride on my train?"

There was no hesitation in the crowds. Each "engineer" rose to his or her feet, with cap on, and lined up at the train's cars. The students were buckled in. The "rail car" doors were secured and off they went. As the Operation Lifesaver train scooted and tooted around the walking track, the children waved and yelled with delight. The safety lessons brought smiles to many faces. Even Principal Janet Anthony enjoyed a ride on the Operation Lifesaver train.

Police Chief Tommy Carroll and Mayor Robert Sides had a chance to drive some of the kids around. Carroll, who invited NCOL to Grover Elementary, stayed both days helping out with the program, he knows one day could save a life.

Request forms for a visit from the NC Operation Lifesaver train can be found on the organization's website at ncol.org.



EMILY WEAVER/HERALD

Ms. Brandi Edward's first grade class at Grover Elementary takes a zip around the track in the Operation Lifesaver Train. In the first car, front to back: Austin Harwell, Dylan Boone, Robin Vesey, Nathan Siphanthone, Israel Martinez, Carlos Sims. In the second car, front to back: Ethan Smith, Matayia Callahan, Tatiyonna Davis, Logan Inejikan, Heaven Gamble, Jenace Burton.

FEEL LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER?

New in town? Get acquainted with Kings Mountain and all it has to offer by ordering a subscription to the

Kings Mountain Herald

Where To Shop!
Where To Dine!
Community Happenings!
Professional Services!
....And more!

CALL 704-739-7496 To Order!