

Nord Country School students showcase lessons with Egyptian wax museum



Sixth-grader Dacques Newton, left, stands stoically in the persona of Horus during his class' Egyptian wax museum at Nord Country School on Tuesday.

By Ashley Gebb, Chico Enterprise-Record

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Nord >> She may be named for a Bob Dylan song, but on Tuesday, Isis Brown assumed the persona of another namesake.

The sixth-grader joined her 15 Nord Country School classmates in impersonating characters from ancient Egyptian history to create a wax museum for their parents, schoolmates and teachers. Naturally, Isis presented as the goddess who shares her name, her arms outstretched to showcase colorful feathers, a collar of gems adorning her neck and a large

black ankh in her hand.

“It’s awesome. I am so impressed with the costumes, and every student has memorized every line,” gushed Brown’s grandmother, Marcie Porras, as she toured the museum.

The students stood stone-faced and statue-still as visitors passed by. If one offered a hello, they launched into a brief explanation of who they were and key details about their historical importance. Before returning to their stoic wax selves, they offered an Egyptian blessing.

Admiring the tall paper crown of Osiris, the feathered falcon face of Khonsu, the long black beak of Set — children and adults alike were enraptured by the elaborate costumes. Blaine Owens proved a popular subject, with an elaborate blue and gold headdress dangling below his shoulders, and during a brief break from character he admitted he was happy with his assignment to be Zoser.

“He built the first pyramid and that was one of my favorite facts,” he said.

Blaine thinks he will remember the Egypt unit for the rest of his life, after becoming fascinated with its agricultural practices, the gods and their way of life. It helped that so many lessons were hands-on, he said, noting students even saw and touched papyrus.

“It’s easier to remember when we have done things like that, instead of going back and looking at notes,” he said.

The museum is the capstone of a two-month history unit focused on Ancient Egypt. The lessons focus on research, reading, writing and two new elements of the Common Core by incorporating public speaking and presenting, said teacher Kelli Ruley.

Admittedly, the unit is as much her favorite as it is the students’.

“I like seeing their excitement for learning about an ancient culture and how this project can connect with them and be more than just words in a textbook,” she said. “There’s a lot of mystery enshrouded in that history ... so it’s really neat to watch the kids get excited.”

Admirers paused to hear the bios of Tutankhamun, Ramses II and Horus. With a flower in her outstretched hand and wide gold collar around her neck, Kayla O’Rear told the story of Cleopatra and how she became a ruler at age 8, fell in love with Mark Antony, and died a slow and painful death after a bite from a cobra.

The students were randomly assigned their characters, and Kambria Lucas was thrilled to take on Nefertiti because she was one of only two female pharaohs, she said.

“And she was one of the most beautiful queens,” she said, proudly wearing the icon’s favorite colors of gold, silver and blue.

GG Gibson tried not to smile as younger students eyed the stuffed jackal on her head. As Anubis, the god of mummification, she also held a staff as a symbol of the god’s power.

“It’s really cool to get out of yourself and become another person,” she said.