

Raymond Park Students Step It Up

The YMCA challenged schools across the nation to participate in America on the Move Week. During the week, students at Raymond Park MS in Indianapolis recorded 27,828,710 steps to take top honors among participating schools in the Greater Indianapolis area. The World's Greatest Strongman, Bill Kazmaier, visited the school October 9 to congratulate and further motivate the students in their self-discipline efforts toward healthy wellness.

Region 8

Chinese Teacher Visits Brownsburg

Visiting Chinese teacher Peter Meng has been a dynamic addition to Brownsburg East MS. Students and staff alike benefit from Peter's creative teaching and enthusiasm for personal learning. This is the second year BEMS has hosted a Chinese teacher as a part of the US State Department's Critical Language Initiative. Brownsburg launched a Chinese language program beginning with 7th graders at Brownsburg East and West Middle Schools in 2006-2007. With each succeeding year, another level of Chinese will be offered up through grade 12. Peter has partnered with permanent Chinese teacher Guoping Ren, as well as taught about the growing Chinese economy and environmental problems in 7th grade global studies class.

Meng feels that in some ways American teachers are under more stress than Chinese teachers. He cites the days crammed with teaching, short seasonal breaks, and lack of motivation among some students as particular stressors for US educators. He sums it up by saying "In China, the students work hard and the teachers have it a little easier. In the US, the teachers work hard, and the students have it a little easier." However, he values the creativity in teaching and learning he has experienced.

Peter is interested in visiting a variety of schools. He could also be a dynamic guest speaker for your faculty or students. For more information, contact Stephanie Bode at sbode@brownsburg.k12.in.us.

*Stephanie Bode
Social Studies*

Region 10

ORIENTEERING



Our Mt. Vernon Middle School's Team Eagles, consisting of 150 8th graders, embarked on a new adventure this year – literally. Our stu-

dents were introduced to the sport of Orienteering – the competitive sport of navigation (the art and science of finding one's way from a location to a destination) – using special orienteering maps.

This three-day, standards-driven adventure creatively integrated all academic disciplines into the entire learning process. More than the academics, the students learned tolerance, team work and leadership skills. During this 3-day process, students were trained by Jeff Coates with True North 360 on how to read maps, use a compass and navigate using these and other orienteering tools.



On day one our students were introduced to various types of maps and were taught how to use a map and a compass together. They then had to navigate to a checkpoint within our school building and solve a clue. The students anticipated that the task would be incredibly easy, but soon found it to be very challenging. They also quickly discovered that in order to be successful all group members needed to participate and help by



using the navigation tools. Despite some early morning rain showers on day two, the students went outside to navigate school grounds.

After two days of preparation and anticipation, our students traveled to Eagle Creek Park to put their newly acquired skills to the test. Students were to navigate using their maps and compasses through the woods with their groups to find checkpoints where letter clues were located. Staff, students and chaperones could feel their excitement and nervousness. The goal was to use the navigation tools and find as many checkpoints and letter clues as possible. After finding all of their checkpoints and letter clues, each team had to successfully navigate back to the shelter house where they had to solve a word scramble. The word scramble, when solved, created a clue for a hidden key that unlocked a real treasure box!

As an educator, it was amazing to see the entire orienteering process and to see how the students evolved as leaders and cooperative learners. They began this adventure without knowing anything about orienteering and were very nervous and anxious about the entire process. This quickly turned to curiosity, wisdom and success. The Team Eagles teachers felt it was a huge success and are already looking forward to next year's orienteering adventure.

*Stacy Griner
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