

Weston students learn about fire prevention

Written by Patricia Gay

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There's more to fire safety than "Stop, Drop and Roll."

Although National Fire Prevention Week will be taking place throughout the country next week, students in Kendra Verdi's fourth grade class at the Weston Intermediate School got an early lesson on fire prevention and safety.

John Braden and Rob LaPlaca of the Weston Volunteer Fire Department spoke to the class on Friday, Sept. 30, in an interactive format, asking students questions and demonstrating their fire equipment.

"What do you do when the fire alarm goes off in school? What do you do when an alarm goes off in your home?" the firefighters asked.

As students offered possible answers, the firefighters reminded them to walk outside in an orderly fashion with the class when an alarm goes off in school, and go to a planned meeting spot should an alarm go off at home. "This helps firefighters know where everyone is," Mr. LaPlaca said.



The firefighters offered other fire prevention and safety tips, such as having a portable ladder in the house so people can climb out of a window if necessary to escape a fire. "You always need to have two ways out of your home," the firefighters said.

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They told students if they see matches outside to leave them alone and tell an adult where they are.

The group also discussed carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless gas that can be harmful or fatal to humans and animals in high quantities. "You can't see it and you can't smell it," Mr. LaPlaca said.

Mr. Braden showed the class a carbon monoxide reader that tells firefighters if there is carbon monoxide in the house. He passed it around so each student could look at it.

There was a discussion of "Stop, Drop and Roll," which the students knew was the proper action to take if their clothes caught on fire.



The three components are: Stop still. Cease any movement that may fan the flames or hamper those attempting to put the fire out. Drop to the ground, lying down if possible, covering the face to avoid facial injury. Roll on the ground, in an effort to extinguish the fire by depriving it of oxygen.

Mr. Braden then demonstrated all the equipment a firefighter needs to wear when going on a fire call. His pants and coat were made of fireproof materials. On his feet he wore steel-toed boots. He also added breathing apparatus, and topped the outfit off with a helmet.

After the presentation, Ms. Verdi said the kids were engaged and interested in learning about how to be safe during a fire.

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“I thought the presentation was beneficial in reminding them of fire safety and what to do in case a fire occurred in their home. The kids enjoyed learning about the devices the fire department uses to help find the origin of the fire and to detect carbon monoxide in the air. It was helpful to remind the students and their families to have a meeting area in case they should become separated from one another during a fire,” she said.

In conjunction with National Fire Prevention Week, the Weston Volunteer Fire Department is holding a free open house on Saturday, Oct. 15, from 10 to 1 at the Norfield Firehouse, rain or shine. Families are welcome to stop by, see the fire trucks, and meet the firefighters.

