

Water safety program teaches life-preserving practices to students

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Dogwood Elementary kindergartners were the first to experience a new program on water safety put together by the Lake of the Ozarks Water Safety Council, the Missouri State Highway Patrol Marine Division and the Camdenton 4-H FIRST LASER Robotics Team.

The program is designed to teach children how to be safe around water from an early age, which is something the organizations feel is especially important around the Lake. It starts with a ten-minute cartoon, and is followed by a demonstration on life jackets and their proper use. The children see how and why life jackets are so important. The hope is that increasing safety consciousness in children will encourage parents to be more safety-oriented themselves.

As volunteer Regan Hubbard explained "It's important to teach them early, because the rest of the family is more likely to listen if the children already know."

Afterwards, any children who live around the Lake that do not own a life jacket receive one, provided to the program with funding from the Performance Boat Center and Lake Ozark Marine.

The participants in the program felt this was the most effective use of the funding to teach about water safety in the Lake of the Ozarks area.

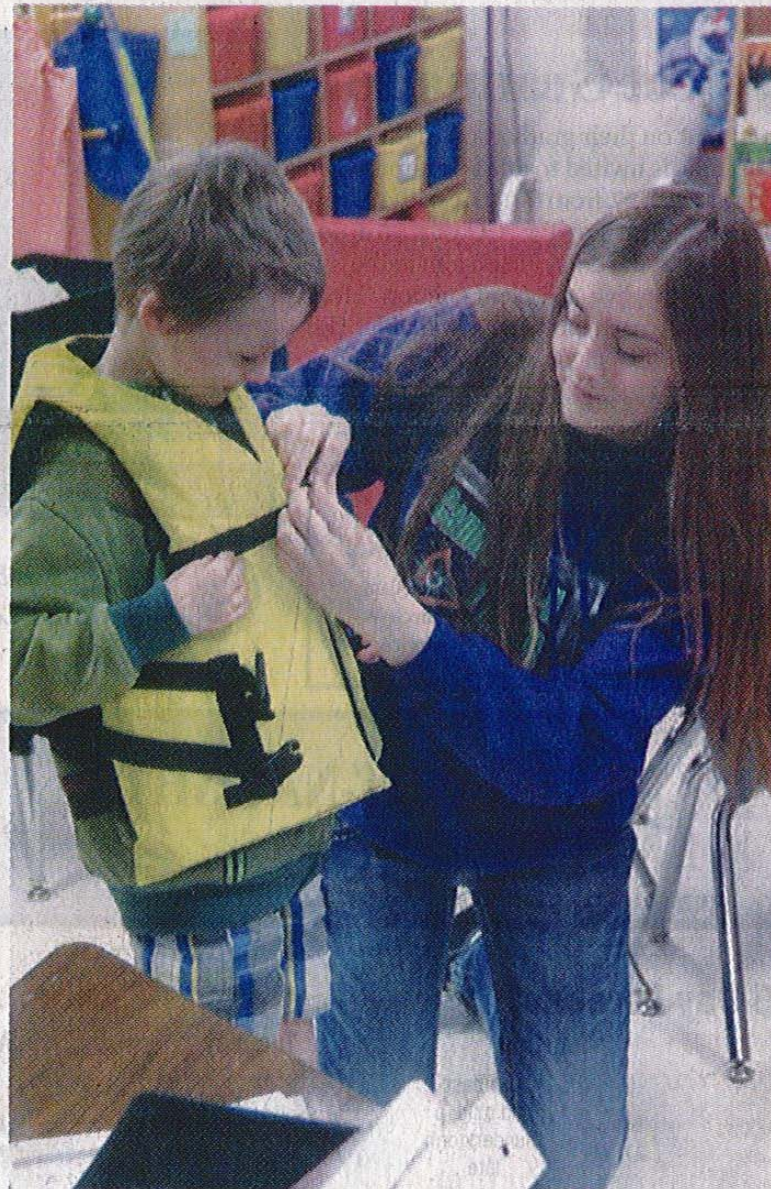
As the head of FIRST LASER, Mitchell Comer saw a responsibility for the team to give back to the community.

"I believe in community service, because the community does so much for us. We just try to give back as much as we can."

The program was conceived by the 4-H FIRST LASER, whose members pride themselves on being extremely safety-conscious. This focus on safety has led to them receiving the Underwriter Laboratories Industrial Safety Award for five years running. This inspired the team to spread a message of safety to others, and the program grew from there.

Volunteers from the club go out with Stacey Mosher, a Missouri State Highway Patrol Corporal assigned to the Marine Division, who is the primary teacher in the program.

"It took a lot of people to make it happen. The troopers of MSHP Troop F are committed to making the Lake of the Ozarks as safe as we can, and appreciate the opportunity to work through the Water Safety Council to make this program a reality," Mosher said.



Elementary students at Dogwood work together to demonstrate the importance of good water safety practices.