

# **Fifth Graders Explore Environmental Concepts and More at L&C Water Festival**

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GODFREY – Approximately 350 fifth graders from 6 local schools learned all about the importance of water and Clark Community College for the 12th Annual Water Festival Friday, Sept. 19.at Lewis

“We had a great turnout and a beautiful day for this year’s festival,” said Natalie Marioni, Environmental Education Manager for L&C and the National Great Rivers

Research and Education Center. “New this year was the Shoeman Water Projects activity and collection. We collected 757 pairs of shoes, which not only benefits people who cannot afford new shoes, but exporting these shoes to places like Kenya and South America generates funding to create wells and water purification systems to provide people throughout the world with access to clean drinking water. Tonya Koller’s class from Carlinville Intermediate School won the classroom shoe collection contest by bringing in 156 pairs of shoes.” Approximately 20 exhibits were set up to give students hands-on learning experiences, including lessons in water quality, urban fishing and canoeing.

Kara Forsting, a fifth grade teacher at North Elementary School, said, “Water Festival is a fun learning event for the students. After the festival, we incorporate the things the children have learned into our subject matter throughout the school year. The students really enjoy the fishing and riding in the canoe is also a big favorite.”

Teachers from participating classes took part in an educational workshop Monday, Sept. 15, in preparation for the event. They were given instructional materials, including a stream sampling kit, to use in their classrooms throughout the rest of the school year.

“This is my first year here and it is amazing,” said Carrie Zuzzio, an Eastwood Elementary School teacher. “The students are having so much fun and learning so much about water and the environment.”

Besides fishing and canoeing, students also enjoyed collecting aquatic insects, learning about the Lewis and Clark Expedition, identifying native fish species and gyotaku, which is Japanese fish painting.

“I’m having a lot of fun and I even caught two huge tadpoles from the lake,” said Clayton Blunt, a 10-year-old from Eastwood Elementary School.

Water Festival sponsors included Illinois American Water, Southern Regional Groundwater Protection Planning Committee, Madison County, Veolia Water, Phillips 66, the Water Division of the Horinko Group, Pepsi, Walmart, St. Louis Bread Company, Dynagy and the Nature Institute.

For more information about L&C activities, visit [www.lc.edu](http://www.lc.edu).