

Today's Sunbeam

Read Across America program takes wacky turn at Penn Beach School in Pennsville Township

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By Phil Dunn

pdunn@sjnewsco.com

PENNSVILLE TWP. - Students at Penn Beach School here celebrated Read Across America Week in a wacky way.

After the student body read 1,000 books in five days, they earned a special assembly Wednesday that included a visit from Philadelphia Eagles mascot Swoop and cheerleaders Monica Grandlienard and Ayva Woleset.

"This is all about reading," Principal Mark Zoppina said to the kids. "The more books you read, the better readers you will become."

Read Across America is a national initiative that celebrates Dr. Seuss birthday, which was on Tuesday, and promotes literacy among children.

Before the mystery readers came out, teachers asked the students who they thought might have come to read to them.

One student said Dr. Seuss; another said Lady Gaga. But they were all surprised when Swoop soared into the gymnasium.

Grandlienard and Woleset read the Dr. Seuss book "Wacky Wednesday" to the student body. Students and teachers alike dressed the part of the book as many wore mismatched colors and crazy outfits.

Some had goofy wigs and hats, while others had funky hairstyles and flipped their clothes inside out.

"This was really great. We really didn't expect this many students," said Woleset. "The kids were all energized too and ready to have fun."

Swoop was on hand to help the Eagles cheerleaders as they read through the book. Swoop acted out the pages while the students pointed out the wacky mistakes.

The kids saw doors that didn't line up with houses, an old man with a beard in class, desks turned backward in the classroom, and doorways placed in the middle of the sidewalk.

"We wanted to give the kids a unique way to celebrate their hard work," said first-grade teacher Maria Petro.

After the cheerleaders finished reading, all the students sang along to the Eagles fight song "Fly, Eagles, Fly."

"Are there any Eagles fans out here today?" yelled Grandlienard.

As students cheered, Swoop ran around the audience slapping hands and cheering along with the students.

The cheerleaders danced as the student body sang the fight song.

"E-A-G-L-E-S, Eagles," they all yelled.

Part two of the assembly gave students and employees a chance to throw a pie in the face of Zoppina - a promise he made to the student body if they read 1,000 books. He stayed true to his word.

Three students and one employee got the chance to throw a pie in the face of Zoppina for their reading accomplishment.

The best throw came from Head Custodian John McCauley. He heaved a mighty toss at Zoppina that caused pie filling to fly everywhere.

"At least it tastes good," said Zoppina.

It was clear from the assembly that many of the faculty, staff, and parents were proud of the kids for what they accomplished.

"The important thing here is that the kids read 1,000 books," said Zoppina. "They earned this and the assembly was a lot of fun."

The excitement was still seen on the students faces as they began to file out of the gymnasium smiling ear to ear.

"Keep up the great work and keep on reading," said first-grade teacher Emily Sassi.



Penn Beach School celebrates Read Across America

Added by **Britney Lillya** on March 4, 2010 at 12:57 PM
Penn Beach Elementary School 1st grade student

teacher Kristina Kearney and 1st grade teacher Emily Sassi, center, talk to students with Philadelphia Eagles mascot Swoop during Wednesday's Read Across America Wacky Wednesday assembly at Penn Beach Elementary School.



Penn Beach School celebrates Read Across America

Added by **Britney Lillya** on March 4, 2010 at 12:57 PM
Philadelphia Eagles mascot Swoop wipes pie off Penn Beach

Elementary School Principal Mark Zoppina during Wednesday's Read Across America Wacky Wednesday assembly at Penn Beach Elementary School.

Penn Beach School celebrates Read Across America

Added by **Britney Lillya** on March 4, 2010 at 12:57 PM Philadelphia Eagles mascot Swoop watches as Head Custodian John McCauley, center, blasts Principal Mark Zoppina in the face with a pie during Wednesday's Read Across America Wacky Wednesday assembly at Penn Beach Elementary School.



Penn Beach School celebrates Read Across America

Added by **Britney Lillya** on March 4, 2010 at 12:57 PM Penn Beach Elementary School third grade student Luke Headman throws a pie in the face of Principal Mark Zoppina during Wednesday's Read Across America Wacky Wednesday assembly. Three students were chosen to throw pies at the principal as a reward for reading over 1,000 books in five days.



Penn Beach School celebrates Read Across America

Added by **Britney Lillya** on March 4, 2010 at 12:57 PM Penn Beach Elementary School 1st grade student Derrick Taylor, left, prepares to throw a pie in Principal Mark Zoppina's face as 1st grade student teacher Kristina Kearney, center, looks on during Wednesday's Read Across America Wacky Wednesday assembly at Penn Beach Elementary School.



Penn Beach School celebrates Read Across America

Added by **Britney Lillya** on March 4, 2010 at 12:57 PM Philadelphia Eagles cheerleaders Monica Grandlienard, left, and Ayva Woleset read "Wacky Wednesday" by Dr. Seuss to Penn Beach Elementary School students during a Read Across America assembly Wednesday afternoon.





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Added by **Britney Lillya** on March 4, 2010 at 12:57 PM

Penn Beach Elementary School second grade student's Alexandria Curll, left, and Kelly Passaro dressed for Wacky Wednesday during a Read Across America assembly Wednesday afternoon.

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Added by **Britney Lillya** on March 4, 2010 at 12:57 PM

Penn Beach Elementary School 4th grade student Ronni Foster, left, high-fives 1st grade student teacher Kristina Kearney after throwing a pie in Principal Mark Zoppina's face during Wednesday's Read Across America Wacky Wednesday assembly at Penn Beach Elementary School.

