

Wax museum lets students show off research, portray black historic figures

BY LESLIE BIXLER • Staff writer • March 4, 2010

FREMONT -- Fifth-graders at Stamm Elementary School participated in the African-American wax museum Wednesday, portraying nearly 50 people.

Students, portraying famous people such as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Langston Hughes, Jesse Owens, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr., took up stations in the gymnasium. To hear them speak, visitors had to press a button. Then the student talked about the portrayed person's life.

Fifth-grade language arts teacher Nichole Almroth, who organizes the event each year, said they start the project in mid-January. Students research people from history they want to learn more about.

Students take a trip to the library to do research and learn how to take notes, make outlines and write a paper.

Almroth said they spend one to two weeks memorizing their speeches for the wax museum.

"The biggest challenge is for the students going from third person (when they research) to first person (at the wax museum)," Almroth said.

Alex Fausnaugh portrayed Benjamin Banneker, a mathematician and amateur astronomer who lived from 1731 to 1806.

"I think it's just a fun thing to do," Fausnaugh said. "It was hard work."

First-grader Thomas Gluth went around and listened to some of the fifth-graders.

"I think it's really neat," he said. He looks forward to participating when he's in fifth grade.

Isaiah Jones portrayed Medgar Evers, a civil rights activist and secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People who was assassinated in 1963. Jones said he liked everything about the wax museum, including all the research

he did.

Gabe Boose portrayed Malcolm X, a civil rights activist who was assassinated in 1965.



Stamm Elementary School fifth-grader Manuel Gutierrez portrays Elijah McCoy during the annual African-American wax museum. (Jonathon Bird | News-Messenger)



Students at Stamm Elementary gather around to hear about the life of Jesse Owens as it is portrayed by fifth-grader Noah Leah during their annual African-American wax museum on Wednesday. (Jonathon Bird News-Messenger)