

# RAFT Hands-On Learning Spotlight

## HP VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION IN THE CLASSROOM

*HP's Bill Rainey and Leanne Gibson Collaborate on Science and Math Projects with 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teachers at Orchard Elementary School*

San Jose, CA – Resource Area for Teaching, RAFT, and HP teamed up with Orchard Elementary School in San Jose to bring the business community into the classroom to help inspire the next generation of scientists and technologists. The program is part of the National Lab Network Initiative to pair teachers with professionals in the business sector.

“It is good for kids to see people from the business world coming into their world,” said Laura Bootorich, third grade teacher at Orchard Elementary School. “Our HP volunteers were exceptional. They gave us a chance to engage with our kids on a level that we don’t normally have. We were there to assist our students and the kids get to see us in a different light. In fact, the kids are already asking for them to come back.”

While HP provided the volunteers, RAFT provided hands-on materials and, together with their know-how and passion for what they do, they worked with educators to give students a real hands-on learning experience. HP Volunteers Bill Rainey and Leanne Gibson assisted with two RAFT activity kits. The Glove-a-Phone teaches students to explore the science of sound creating an instrument out of a latex glove, a piece of straw and a cardboard tube. The Anamorphic Art project uses science, math and art to create an image on a curved grid. Both activities address science curriculum standards - one for teaching sound and sound waves, the other for teaching reflection and graphing.



**RAFT Glove-a-Phone**

One of the concepts of the National Lab Network is not only to pair people from industry with teachers, but to bring these professionals into the classroom to show students the types of jobs they could aspire to.

“Volunteering was great,” said Bill Rainey, a Channel Development Manager for HP. “The kids were having fun doing these hands on math and science projects. I actually saw some light bulbs go on when they grasped the concept. They also got to keep their projects, so the joy and fun was in actually doing it and keeping it. I asked them to take it a step further - Where would you use it? Would it be different if we changed it? It was great because they didn’t know the concept when they came into the classroom that day and by the end of the lesson they learned what it was, how to build it, they got to play with it, and in the end they really learned it. It was theory and application, in real life.”



**RAFT Anamorphic Art Cup**

Both HP volunteers also came away from the experience with a renewed respect for teachers and the important work they do on a daily basis.

“It is important that students realize how the things they are learning actually will come into use later in life, and having volunteers come in from outside can give them a different perspective,” said Leanne Gibson, a Worldwide Sales Program Manager at HP. “Hopefully they came away with an awareness of how we experience math, science and technology in our daily lives, often without even realizing it. Although my job is not heavy in science or math, I was able to give specific examples of how skills in

those areas helped me to manage programs, create progress reports, etc. We looked for illustrations from their experiences, as well, and it was impressive how quickly they were able to provide examples from their own lives.”

While RAFT’s hands on materials and idea sheets are readily available to teachers, it helps to have a few extra sets of hands in the classroom to give new perspective to the projects and the lessons students are learning.

“RAFT was instrumental in bringing all of the pieces together,” said Michelle Mascarenas, third grade teacher at Orchard Elementary School. “If we hadn’t had the support of RAFT throughout the process we probably would not have done it. Having volunteers do hands-on activities is the best of both worlds. You get to have the kids be fully engaged in a hands-on learning project versus a controlled project which is often required when you only have 1 adult in the room with 30-35 students. With the HP volunteers conducting a science activity they really had the chance to explore, try things on their own, make mistakes and then figure out how to solve it with the guidance of real world scientists.”

HP’s initiative encourages company volunteers and retirees to support education innovation. RAFT provides a support framework and training for Bay Area HP volunteers to leverage their skills in the classroom. Rainey and Gibson are already planning to return to Orchard Elementary School before the school year is over.

”I had not volunteered for the classroom visits in the past, as I was afraid I did not have the science or math background required.” said Gibson. “But, the projects are well-explained and simple to learn. And, I actually was able to mention the fact that I was also learning to the students, hoping to encourage some who did not see themselves as strong in math or science. And RAFT has done an amazing job of creating fun, hands-on learning projects for the students.”

For more information about how you can volunteer in the classroom or get involved in other RAFT programs, go to <http://www.raft.net>



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