

Turf Talk

On January 29th SLHOA2 hosted a community outreach program with SanTan Jr. High School and their students participating in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). It was a joint effort from the GCSAA (Golf Course Superintendents Association of America) and their First Green Program.

The First Green Program is a GCSAA initiative to introduce young people to the game of golf through the world of Turf Grass Management. It is a sister program of the PGA First Tee Program with both entities having a goal of passing along the values, lessons learned and careers that are associated with the game of golf. The event was also training for other Golf Superintendents around the country that have a desire to reach out to kids in their community to further the game of golf.

Addressing students....



Addressing Golf Superintendents



The Club had 4 stations of learning prepared to discuss water, 'cool-tools', soils and fun.

At the water station, students learned about sprinkler heads and their operation. The children had firsthand opportunities to glue pvc pipe together. Students got to read irrigation maps and turn on water from a control pedestal. They discussed the importance of water and the need for responsible use of the resource. Students became familiar with the different sources of water....effluent water, ground water, CAP, rainwater. There were good discussions of water demands in varying climates around the world.



At the 'cool-tools' station, students had opportunities to review different mowing equipment. They were able to see the difference between greens mowers, tee mowers, greens rollers, rough units and fairway mowers. They became familiar with data collection instruments, and how to change hole locations. The children experienced what it is like to walk on grass that is 0.120" tall. They were able to see the differences in types of seed and turf types that are used on property... bentgrass, rough bluegrass, ryegrass, bermudagrass.



At the soils, fertilizer station the students learned about measuring green speeds, soil temperatures, and reviewed soil-water test reports. They discussed rotary spreaders vs drop spreaders and where / how they are used. The importance of calibration was discussed and how to determine area, weight, and percentage of macro-elements such as Nitrogen.



And... lastly... the students got to have a little fun on the putting green. The putting contest within each group was a great way to have a little more enjoyment beyond the 'schoolwork'. It was a way to learn about STEM without realizing.... learning how to read break in putts, the importance of pace and ball speed, the advancement of golf clubs, etc. The event was a great experience for all the kids and may have sparked some interest in students becoming future 'Grass-Farmers'.



I want to thank the Golf Committee and SLHOA2 for allowing me to host this Community Outreach Program.

Scott Anderson
Golf Course & Common Area Manager