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Davie students take part in Solar Week activities

By Scott Fishman, Forum Publishing Group

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More than 80 fourth-graders and their teachers from Nova Blanche Forman Elementary in Davie recently got a closer view of the sun through two solar telescopes.

The children learned more about the Earth's closest star, glowing brightly in the daytime sky 93 million miles away.

The activity, in the observatory at Broward College's Davie Campus, was one of several the students participated in as part of Solar Week.

Students also got to see the sun through special "eclipse-type" solar viewing glasses and participate in a demonstration showing the power of its ultraviolet radiation.

"The presentation was shining with amazement," said student Emily Hernandez. "Literally, we saw the sun and how many Earths fit into it."

Having just completed their science unit on the sun, many students used the trip to garner ideas for dioramas, poetry and podcasts they have to create and share with peers.

Solar scientist Jim Stryder led the discussion and exercises. The Davie resident's involvement with NASA and its outreach programs allows him to spread awareness of the solar sciences.

"Usually, about eight out of 10 students this age and grade range have never seen the sun in a telescope, nor even knew they could," he said.

Stryder has built relationships with schools such as Nova Blanche and Gator Run Elementary in Weston. Michele Parsons, Nova Blanche's science resource liaison, jumped at the chance to work with Stryder. Also as part of Solar Week, students got to ask questions online to participating NASA scientists.

"I have coordinated a variety of trips focusing on environmental issues that provided realistic points of reference and experiences for our students," she said. "Mr. Stryder has been very gracious and shares boatloads of stellar resources. His enthusiasm is awesome."

For more information on Solar Week, visit <http://www.solarweek.org>.



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