

Restaurant

Seventh grade math class serves up some meals

By DAVID GREEN

Morenci's seventh grade mathematics students took a few simple math skills into the kitchen and back out into the dining room in a restaurant project that broadened into a variety of life skills.

Teacher Ashley Joughin learned about the restaurant project at a mathematics conference and decided to give it a try. Any chance to take a break from the very scripted Engage NY curriculum is appreciated, Ms. Joughin said, and that was certainly the case with this project.

"The project is assigned at the beginning of the unit with the premise that the kids are not given any class time to complete it," Ms. Joughin said.

They dig into the work when their homework is done in class, and it's done in conjunction with daily classroom lessons that cover the same topics.

"Rather than a test, this serves as an overall assessment at the end of the chapter," she said.

In the end, some class time was used just to make sure things were progressing as planned.

"We took 10 minutes at the beginning of each hour to either look at actual restaurant menus (likes/dislikes), grocery ads, wholesale versus customer costs, and how to be a great waiter or waitress and host or hostess," Ms. Joughin said. "This seemed to help. We also used this project to introduce some life skills. It gave us an avenue to introduce customer service, professionalism, accountability, and the importance of hard work."

Enthusiasm was high.

Students wanted to discuss what worked

and what failed for their start-up restaurant, take photos of their team, trade successful recipes, etc.

"It was easy to see their interest was much higher when having to create and choose their own avenues while relating to percents and rates," Ms. Joughin said.

Seven restaurants were created—one Italian, one Mexican, one Mexican/American and four American—and students prepared a variety of food for a two-day presentation in which food was served to other students and guests.

Students filled the roles of host/hostess, waiter/waitress and owner. They welcomed customers, took their orders from menus they created, made sure customers' drinks were filled, delivered food to the tables, computed each table's check—including 6.0 percent sales tax and a 15 percent tip. And in the end, they thanked the guests for coming.

"It was so rewarding to see them enjoy math in a real world scenario," Ms. Joughin said. "Students were not required to cook a dish from their menu, but each group did. It was fun to see students trying foods they'd never tried before."

Students have one other special project—a vacation planning experience taught by co-teacher Ms. Grondin—that will use ratios and proportions.

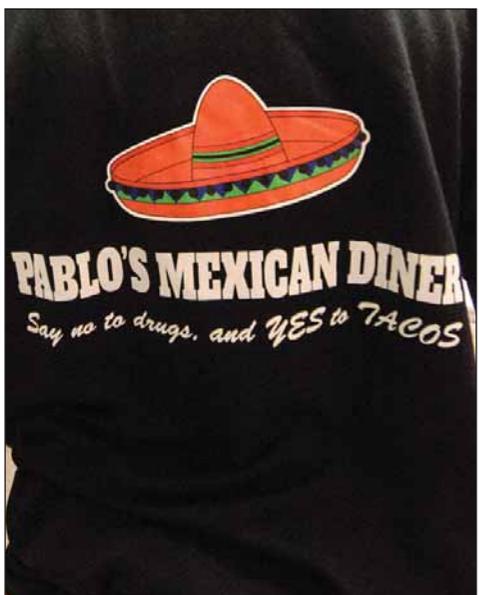
The next time these kids go out for dinner, you can bet they'll take a look at the restaurant operation with an entirely new understanding.



INTHEKITCHEN—Cameron Smith, Breckin Alcock and Kyle Hudson work in the kitchen, serving enchiladas from Pablo's Mexican Diner. The restaurant slogan, shown on the shirt below, was "So no to drugs and YES to tacos."

DESSERTS—Sophie Corkle pours chocolate syrup onto ice cream atop a brownie while Haley Calderon waits to serve it to a guest.

DAVID GREEN/Observer photos



SHIRTS—Two of the restaurant teams designed shirts and ordered them to wear for the presentation.



CUSTOMERS—Secondary principal Kim Irish (back left) and teacher Renae Schaffner (center) were among the diners. Math teacher Ashley Joughin is with her back to the camera. Kyle Hudson takes their orders.

School art show set Friday and Saturday



Morenci's All-School Art Show is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Elementary, middle and high school art will be featured in the high school gymnasium.

The show includes a preview of work done in preparation for the Smithsonian Institution exhibit "Hometown Teams" which will be on display in the fall at Stair District Library.