THE CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION FOR AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

May 2016

hands on agriculture
GROWING… WITH YOUR SUPPORT.

Celebrating 30 Years and 10 Top Crops

The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, a milestone made possible by its generous donors. The organization set out on a mission in 1986, to increase agricultural understanding and awareness among California’s students and educators. With the backing of more than 1,400 companies and individuals, Ag in the Classroom continues today to equip students and educators with resources to discover and teach agriculture.

The What’s Growin’ On? student newspaper is one of the Foundation’s most popular resources, reaching over 1 million readers annually. The latest edition showcases California agriculture by celebrating the state’s ten most valuable commodities, providing information and activities related to milk, almonds, grapes, cattle, strawberries, walnuts, lettuce, hay, tomatoes, and nursery plants. Each page includes a STEM activity, highlighting how science, technology, engineering and math play a role in the journey from farm to fork. A career spotlight helps students discover the many opportunities agriculture provides.

Message from Judy Remy

I have found that the Ag in the Classroom brand is to agricultural education like the Disney brand is to family entertainment. When you are introduced to an organization you know is making a difference, it stays with you. I did not imagine I would ultimately come to work for Ag in the Classroom when, 30 years ago, I met this group of talented people, committed to teaching students, teachers and families about California agriculture.

My journey getting here included advertising and marketing with radio and television stations in Sacramento and ultimately working for the Walt Disney Company. The Disney brand is second to none when it comes to family entertainment. When I arrived at Ag in the Classroom, one year ago, I quickly discovered this organization’s powerful brand recognition.

As I develop donor relations, what rings true is the positive brand awareness Ag in the Classroom has throughout the industry. As I work with my colleagues, I understand how they have created this stellar reputation. Their attention to industry accuracy and teacher relations is unparalleled. This small staff does amazing things across the state. As the population increases, the demands are even greater to make sure the agriculture story is told.

Thank you and please contact me if you have suggestions for increasing support of this important message.

JUDY REMY, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING

Invasive Species

In January, the invasive species fact sheets were mailed to the principal of every private and public K-12 school in California. Explore the resources at www.LearnAboutAg.org/invasivespecies.

Seed Survivor Mobile

The California tour of the Seed Survivor Mobile classroom visited 117 schools and 16 events between November and April. More than 30,000 students participated, learning how food is grown and what plants need to survive. The tour’s final stop was at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo’s Open House on Saturday, April 16, where guests enjoyed exploring the mobile’s computer games and planting sunflower seeds. Teachers and future teachers in attendance explored Ag in the Classroom’s teaching resources.
Imagining Agriculture in Los Angeles

Jeff Miedema has been submitting his students’ work to the Imagine this… Story Writing Contest since 1995. That’s only two years after the contest was created. For the past 20 years, Miedema has used the contest to introduce his Los Angeles County students to agriculture.

“My students learn about the history of farming in our local community and the rich heritage we owe to the farming industry in our region and the state,” he said. “Our city, San Dimas, was founded by farmers and ranchers. Although farming has moved out of our region over the years, it is important to know our past. We also need to know that California, as a state, produces an abundance of agricultural products, which provide a healthy economy and elevated standard of living.”

Miedema believes the Imagine this… Story Writing Contest is a great incentive for students to research and explore a wide variety of agricultural products. “It’s important students know about all the wonderful products, from medicines to delicious snacks, which provide a healthy economy and elevated standard of living,” he said.

Looking back on the past 20 years, Miedema has many fond memories from helping his students discover agriculture through their research and writing. However, nothing can top the experience of seeing his student honored as a state winner.

“My favorite memory is how special everyone in Agriculture in the Classroom made my student feel by setting up a book signing event and on-camera interview,” he said. “To see my student smiling with happiness from her success as she met so many wonderful people, toured the Capitol, and received her awards was truly an unforgettable experience.”

Many of Miedema’s students have received regional recognition over the years, and this year, his student, Chloe Um won the state award for fifth grade. Miedema traveled to Sacramento for the awards ceremony on March 16, along with his student and her family. Um’s winning story, Healing Kiwifruit, is a well-crafted fairytail about her favorite fruit.

“Kiwifruit is my favorite fruit, and I wanted to tell more people about it. I tried to think of an interesting way to tell younger students about the fruit,” Um said.

Order the book of winning stories at www.LearnAboutAg.org/imaginefruit. Thank you, J.R. Simplot, for your sponsorship!