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Read Across America Comes to Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson

A handful of Saint Mary's College (SMC) lacrosse players took part in Read Across America Day at Lafayette Elementary School, reading Dr. Seuss books to attentive students. In addition to celebrity readers, the PTA served a special breakfast before school of green eggs and ham - along with bagels and fruit to 460 students, parents and grandparents. "It's a fun community tradition," said Pam Severson, President of the PTA. Mrs. Noel, the statuesque second grade teacher, dresses up as a very convincing "Cat in the Hat" and entertains those waiting for their breakfast.

Selecting Dr. Seuss was not by accident, March 2nd happens to be Theodore Geisel's birthday; Geisel is more commonly known as Dr. Seuss. Every year the National Education Association sponsors this reading motivation and awareness program. All across the country educators, librarians and even college lacrosse players seek to celebrate reading.

The White House issued a Presidential Proclamation: "As the foundation that makes all other learning possible, literacy is the key to unlocking every child's full potential. From riding a bus to opening a bank account, our everyday tasks and decisions require comprehension of the written word. On Read Across America Day, we reaffirm our commitment to investing in our children and giving them an essential tool for success in school and in life: the ability to read."

Saint Mary's junior Rob Howard and former Acalanes student, SMC freshman Christian Skuce read to Ms. Skuce's charming and very polite first graders. "I read the Lorax in one of my classes - and so I thought I'd share it with you," Howard said.

The players emphasized that you have to read even more in college than you do in elementary school. They reminded the little ones that the more you read the better you're reading skills will be.

Senior Matt Dini, junior Jim Castilone and freshman Matt Jaber read a trio of Dr. Seuss books to a fourth grade class. These older kids focused on getting autographs post-story. Some of the young ladies were pondering which fellow was the cutest. Jennifer, a young lacrosse fan, said, "It's exciting to meet real lacrosse players."

The students in both classrooms were fascinated by the game of lacrosse and had lots of questions. One young man asked what happens when the ball goes out of bounds, "It depends," said Howard, drawing a picture on the white board. "Imagine this is me - I'm that really cool dot....."

The SMC gentlemen got to be rock stars for the day - they made quite an impression on the younger students. Men's Lacrosse is a Club Sport at Saint Mary's, their season runs through May. "We have improved vastly since last year, largely due to head coach Colin Knightly. We are 4-3 with two losses by one goal and all three teams ranked in the top 25 of the Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association - Division 2. We look forward to the rest of the season, winning a WCLL (their league) championship, and hopefully making a run towards the national tournament in Denver," said Dini. Their last two home games are on March 21 and April 17.



From left Saint Mary's College student athletes Christian Skuce and Rob Howard read to Lafayette Elementary first graders.

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