

This event was more than just a one-time affair. It was the culmination of the school's thematic enrichment program—an 80-minute weekly class for the fifth and sixth grades that uses hands-on techniques to make history and culture exciting and students eager to learn.

"The goal of our political enrichment theme this year is to not only provide a strong education in government and politics but to inspire the students to develop an interest and appreciation in our country," school officials said in the invitation to the inaugural ball. "We are developing the educated voters of the future."

The class is run by fifth-grade teacher Sue Hocking and sixth-grade teacher Patricia Meyers under the supervision of Chief School Administrator Eugene Cioffi. About two dozen parents were actively involved in this year's event, organized by volunteer parent coordinator Rene Jensen, mother of a sixth-grader.

The class began 3 years ago with World War II as its theme, prompted by the 50th anniversary of the end of the war. Students worked with the World War II Commemorative Society of the Department of Defense to put on a Flag Day celebration with local veterans and elected officials. They planted a victory garden, learned dances and music of the era, and ended the class with a USO dance.

Last year, medieval history was the theme as students studied knights and castles. A medieval fair complete with jousting and a banquet marked the end of the class. Students played human chess with children as chess pieces on the school gym floor, redone with huge black and white square to make a chess board. Mr. Cioffi was dubbed "King Eugene III" and his freedom ransomed when kidnaped by an opposing kingdom.

In preparation for this year's inaugural ball, students staged a mock election between President Clinton and former Senator Bob Dole. (Dole won 79-73.) In other preparation and research, local Lincoln expert Joseph Garrera organized a display to help students understand the Civil War President.

For the remainder of this year, the class will study archeology. The school's victory garden has been seeded with objects and will be the site of an archaeological dig in the spring.

The thematic enrichment class is not the only innovative program at Frelinghuysen Elementary.

In the Families Read Every Day program run by first-grade teacher Linda Banta, students take home a book each night to read with their parents, then receive scrip-like awards in class the next day that can be saved up to buy prizes from a classroom store.

At a Valentine's Day tea, fifth- and sixth-graders will be visited by senior citizens who will discuss their favorite Presidents in an interactive, intergenerational learning process.

The school has begun a Native American Cultural Center by building an authentic teepee in the schoolyard and teaching classes about native American culture inside. A second teepee and a bark lodge are planned for the future.

Frelinghuysen Elementary was one of several schools in Warren County that recently joined together to purchase "Star Lab," an inflatable, portable planetarium that allows students to learn about astronomy at their own school from their own teachers.

A buddy program pairs kindergartners with fifth-graders as mentors and lunch partners.

All of this is even more impressive when you consider that Frelinghuysen is one of the smallest school systems in our State. With 171 students in kindergarten through sixth grade, it is a single-school school district. Beyond sixth grade, students go to North Warren Regional Middle School and North Warren Regional High School. Chief School Administrator Cioffi wears the dual hats of principal and superintendent, guiding a staff of 13 full-time and three part-time students, plus a nurse and librarian.

These accomplishments clearly show that adults who care—teachers and parents alike—count far more than money in delivering a quality education. These teachers and parents are the heroes, mentors, and role models who hold up the historic value of public education in America. They are an excellent example of a community working together to develop and educate our citizens of tomorrow. Citizen involvement has made America the leader in democracy around the world and their work will keep us in the forefront.

DALLAS AREA STUDENTS RECEIVE AWARDS

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate students from my district for their outstanding accomplishments.

Ten students were awarded 4-year scholarships which range from \$4,000 to \$25,000 by Texas A&M University as part of its incoming class. The scholarship winners are Richard D. Weaver, Jr., of Carter High School; Julie A. Contreras of Irving High School; Tatiana Alexander of Kimball High School; Edward N. Brown, Jr., and Crystal D. Caldwell of South Oak Cliff High School; Paul L. Andres, John P. Broadnax, and Elizabeth A. Flotte of Talented and Gifted Magnet High School; Kaushawn P. Hicks of Townview Magnet Center; and Martha R. Wilson of Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts.

In addition, Leaksha Dunn, a senior at James Madison High School in Dallas, took top honors in the Dallas County Historical Commission's Heritage Education Essay Contest for her treatise on "James Thibodeaux, a Living Legend in South Dallas." Leaksha won \$50 from the commission and \$500 from the high school's history department.

The hard work and dedication of these students is admirable. Congratulations students, and good luck in all your pursuits.

PROVIDING PORTABILITY FOR MEDIGAP ENROLLEES

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, in the last session of Congress, we passed important legislation giving Americans access to portable insurance coverage regardless of their health status. We did it by enacting the

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

This new law, however, did not extend these same protections to our senior and disabled constituents who are on Medicare. No senior should be forced to live in fear that unexpected medical bills will deprive them of financial independence.

That is why I am introducing, along with 30 of my colleagues, a portability bill for the millions of senior citizens who supplement their Medicare coverage with private insurance. An estimated 10 million senior citizens, one-third of the total number of seniors on Medicare, rely on medigap coverage to meet important health needs. Medigap insurance typically pays for prescription drugs, skilled nursing care, and out-of-pocket deductibles. Without medigap, seniors can face tough choices between paying their medical bills and meeting daily critical needs. And that is a choice they should not be asked to make.

My legislation provides four important protections for seniors and the disabled. First, it will protect seniors with medigap insurance who move out of their plan's service area or whose plan goes out of business. This bill guarantees that those seniors will be able to purchase another plan with comparable coverage even if they have a history of severe illness. This means that seniors who relocate to other States can do so without the fear that they will not be able to secure comparable insurance coverage.

In addition, my bill provides Medicare beneficiaries who choose to enroll in a Medicare HMO the security that they will be able to return to their medigap plan if they are not satisfied. They can utilize this option anytime within the first year of their enrollment.

Third, my bill will help provide security for seniors who lose their employer-provided retiree health benefits. In this era of high bankruptcies and more and more companies withdrawing or reducing health coverage for retirees, this legislation will guarantee that retirees will always have access to insurance coverage beyond Medicare, even if they have had serious health problems.

Finally, this bill will extend to disabled Medicare beneficiaries equal access to all medigap plans. This is an important assurance considering the high medical bills that people with disabilities face.

We took significant steps last Congress with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Let us not forget those who did not benefit from those vital safeguards. Let us protect the millions of senior citizens who rely on medigap policies.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO RELINK BLIND TO EARNINGS TEST

HON. BARBARA B. KENNELLY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mrs. KENNELLY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to restore fairness to the Social Security earnings test for blind individuals. Since 1977, the linking of the blind to senior citizens for the purposes of the earnings test has assisted in helping many blind individuals become self-