

Natalie Hansen

Classroom instructor-Matagorda County Ag in the class volunteer

Dear White-Reinhardt fund for Education Coordinator,

I am so honored to have been selected for the 2009 receive of one of the White-Reinhardt Scholarships. I have been active in the Matagorda County Agriculture in the Classroom for some fifteen years and a science teacher for ten years and with this National exposure will bring enrichment to our county Ag in the class and my classroom instruction.

The conference was centered on the topic of using literacy to learn about agriculture. I have used this concept and am looking forward to in cooperating information learned to further my classroom instruction. The energy the Kansas Agriculture in the Classroom has impressed me beyond what I ever expected from a state program. I was impressed with the amount of literature that they have written and published for the use of the Ag program and teachers. I am planning to purchase the book "Farmers and Ranchers Care for their Animals" and "The Soil Neighborhood". I will use these books as an engagement for the lesson for soil, grassland and erosion unit of study.

With this unit I will cover the importance in the care of the livestock and soil and that the rancher and farmer put into the care of both their livestock and their soil. I inspire responsible stewardship of our environment through education of natural habitats. In the 2009-2010 I will be building an outdoor classroom and garden area in connection with my Science instruction. Using the before mentioned concept of how important it is to maintain the proper care of soil into this new garden will allow the chance to make the connection to kick off the instruction of the variety of soils, the nutrients each has to offer, and the ability to hold and release water. We will test different soil types before filling in the garden areas. In another area of the outdoor classroom area I will instruct the students to history of native and invasive grasses. We will research the historical based native grasses, and what has changed with human intervention to the area. We will learn plant identification and record what is found in a designated area, and then work to re-establish native plants to the area. Charting this progress with allow the students the learning experience of native plants and what happens to allow the changes that humans make to the areas with development.

I, am currently serving on the board of the newly developed Cattlewomen of Matagorda County, and through this organization plan to research grant funds for purchasing, "The Soil Neighborhood", and "Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals" for each of the 10 4th grade reading teachers in Matagorda county. I will also develop lesson plans for the books using the Texas State TEKS as a guideline for the activities.

I sincerely enjoyed and was totally enriched through my experience with the 2009 National Ag in the Classroom Conference. I have marked my calendar to attend the 2010 Conference; you have added a nother follower in your mission to educate the children about agriculture.

Thank you,

Natalie Hansen

