

Press Room

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Electronic reading program helps Vista students

by Candice Reed for the North County Times

VISTA — A group of excited second-graders boarded a multicolored school bus at Olive Elementary School on Tuesday. Instead of being driven away, they sat down to computers and went on an educational ride.

The E Bus, a converted city bus loaded with educational technology, stopped at Olive Elementary School on Tuesday and today, its only North County stop on a national tour.

The colorful vehicle is a promotional tool of the Arizona-based company, Electronic Education, which has produced computerized educational tools such as the Waterford Early Reading Program. Olive

Principal Sarah Whitfield said she believes that the success Olive students have had with the Waterford program in reading scores and overcoming obstacles to literacy led the school to be chosen for a visit by the E Bus.

“I don’t want to brag, but the students and teachers all seem to love this program,” Whitfield said. “We have so many students participating that we don’t have enough computers or programs. I hope to obtain more (technology) for our students and staff.” The Waterford Early Reading Program teaches children to read by involving them in songs, games and stories. The E Bus is demonstrating the use of a new Electronic Education product, KnowledgeBox.

As students scrambled to find seats on the bus, they grabbed their headphones and placed them on their heads. Clicking on the mouse, images of astronauts floating through space, dancing farm animals and an animated jungle full of animals appeared on the screen. “This is fun — I get to listen to movies and it helps me learn to read,” said Austin Miller, 6, of Vista. “I have to keep listening so I can be a better student.”

As the screens came alive with characters of ducks, chickens and alligators, the children read aloud and laughed with delight. “The children don’t even realize that



Hayley Kephart, 6, works with a new interactive educational program called Knowledge Box, which the company’s producer demonstrated at Olive Elementary School on Tuesday and will do again today. (Waldo Nilo/Staff Photographer)

they are learning,” E Bus coordinator Ronda Jones said. “KnowledgeBox . . . is a whole new level of software and digital video. The students really seem to love it.”

The programs are aimed at students in grades kindergarten through second grade, but in many cases, students up to sixth grade participate. The kindergarten students work with the Waterford program 15 minutes a day, while students in higher grades work on it 25 to 30 minutes a day, Whitfield said.

“They receive a lot of positive reinforcement in this program and we’ve had a lot of success with it,” Whitfield said. “I know the students love it and the teachers are excited to learn more about the programs available. I just know that our students have benefited from this program in many ways.”



Jennifer Dumas, area sales director for Electronic Education, helps students at Olive Elementary School in Vista on Tuesday work with KnowledgeBox.