

# Amacca Museum

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*Isaac Stevens Middle School  
Pasco, Washington*

Sixth graders from Isaac Stevens Middle School took a cue from the Smithsonian last March, transforming their cafeteria into a virtual Egyptian tomb, explored by over 300 parents during Amacca Museum Night.

The idea for the project came when two of the school's sixth grade teachers put their heads together to spice-up a unit on Egypt in their curriculum. They decided to transform six weeks of lectures on mummies and hieroglyphs into an event that expanded beyond the classroom, getting parents and other family members involved in the history lesson.

Teachers began teaching the unit in January, dubbing their students young archeologists and inviting them to dig deeper into specific aspects of ancient Egyptian civilization. Students spent the next five weeks in class and in the library researching topics pertaining to ancient Egypt: daily life, the Nile Valley, religion, government, mummification, language, and pyramids. In the final week, the sixth graders worked in school and at home to recreate the artifacts that they had been studying, with the intent of putting them on display in the virtual museum.

On the night of the event, 100 students managed 28 different exhibits around the school cafeteria. Students made statues of Egyptian gods out of clay and papier-mâché. They recreated burial masks, amulets, and clothing. Several students worked to build a life-sized sarcophagus out of cardboard boxes and papier-mâché that visitors could lie in.

In addition to the artifacts, students also developed several Egyptian themed activities to entertain museum-goers. They set up tables where parents and siblings could practice writing in hieroglyphics, or play the ancient game of Senet. Other displays asked parents to solve pyramid math puzzles and watch a puppet show about Egyptian gods and goddesses. All around the room, posters instructed parents on the timeline of Egyptian pharaohs and the

hierarchy of the social classes. 3D models replicated several of the most important pyramids.

Parents, students, and teachers were thoroughly impressed with the content of the exhibit. All involved enjoyed the collaborative atmosphere, as students taught their parents many things they never knew about ancient Egyptian culture. "Visiting Egypt at Stevens was really, really cool!" one parent participant remarked at the end of the event.

The extravagant event cost surprisingly little to produce. Parents and teachers provided most of the materials that students needed for the Egyptian projects, leaving a nominal \$50.00 for the school to spend on odds and ends.

Isaac Stevens Middle School plans to host another similar event next year. The planning committee hopes to expand the activity by featuring multiple civilizations, such as people of the Tigris and Euphrates Valley.

*Robert Elizondo/  
Amanda Wilson & Rebecca Parker  
Principal/  
6th Grade Language Arts & History Teachers  
(509) 543-6798  
relizondo@psd1.org*