



Monday, March 3rd, 2008

'MONTANA LOGGER VISITS SAN DIEGO SCHOOL'

A rural logger will visits friends at Horace Mann Middle School.

Libby, MT. On Monday, March 3rd, a rural ambassador of the Provider Pals® program visited Horace Mann Middle School in San Diego for a day of cultural exchange in what the *Wall Street Journal* has called 'one of the most exciting education initiatives in years.'

Jerry Kelly arrived in his logging work attire and will bring with him some of his work equipment such as a hard hat, safety chaps, chainsaw, etc. The rural resource provider was 'adopted' last fall by Ms. Rocio's students. They have communicated and learned about him, his profession, the bi-products of his profession, and his rural culture all year and finally get a chance to meet him on Monday. Throughout the day the students asked questions of their guest, tried on his 'work clothes', posed for pictures, watched him fire up his chainsaw and make tree cookies, get lessons in how to determine the age of a tree, and earn a certificate pronouncing them 'Pals.'

Bruce Vincent, executive director of Provider Pals®, said "The exchange that took place is truly remarkable considering the fact that most urban students never get to meet the folks that provide the raw products necessary for life and rural folks seldom get to visit the culture of a city like San Diego" "In addition to spending time in Horace Mann Middle School, the rural ambassador visited city sites and got a first hand experience of urban life," he said.

Mr. Kelly, a logger from Missoula, MT has previously served as a rural ambassador and been adopted by various school across the nation. "I feel that this is an incredibly eye-opening, educational experience for both the students and my family. We have had a wonderful time sharing our rural lifestyle and profession with the students in San Diego and had a wonderful time meeting them."

Provider Pals® mission is to build a bridge of understanding between our nation's youth and the people who produce and provide the products that our society consumes. Provider Pals® has earned much attention since receiving the 2002 Ford Motor Company donation that enabled the cultural exchange program to broaden into cities such as Los Angeles, New York City, and Little Rock. Provider Pals® reach expanded by thousands when Caterpillar Foundation gave a grant to build *Provider World*, www.providerpals.com/pworld, a ground breaking educational virtual website where kids play games, chat with other students, learn about rural professions and cultures, and in general - have a great time!

Provider Pals® programming also includes classroom exchanges of rural students traveling to the city and urban students visiting rural northwestern Montana for a week of fun and learning. Selected students from participating urban classrooms participate in the Provider Pals® summer camp in Libby, MT. They stay at the *Preserve America Presidential Award* winning 'Historic Raven Natural Resource Learning Center.' Each day is filled with classroom learning, field trips to local production sites, and outdoor activities.

The program is fully funded, meaning it does not cost the students, teachers, and adopted Pals anything to participate. Over 15,000 California students have had the opportunity to participate in the program due to the generous support from the California Forest Foundation, the Pacific Forest Foundation, and the Sierra Cascade Logging Conference. Out of those, 44 students and 10 teachers have attended Provider Pals Montana summer camp over the past five summers.

For more information on Provider Pals®, call 406-293-8822 or visit www.providerpals.com.