

GLEN ACRES KIDS AGREE:

Trees are important

By **BOB SCOTT**

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A few dozen hands shot up into the air. "I know, I know," the third-graders shouted.

The kids at Glen Acres Elementary School were eager to answer questions about the importance of trees.

"Trees give us oxygen. Trees give animals a home. Trees suck up water. Trees make houses," the kids responded.

Last week, volunteers from Tree Lafayette presented the third and final education program of the spring semester. Similar programs were held at Miller and Edgelea elementary schools.

Before the classroom presentation, a tulip tree was planted in a school courtyard. The tulip tree is Indiana's state tree.

Tree Lafayette instructor Suzie Philyaw, a Miller teacher, used a PowerPoint presentation to teach the energetic children. With question and answer sessions, she taught the students about the types of trees, the parts of a tree and how to care for a tree.

"I love walking around Lafayette and seeing all the beautiful trees," she told the students.

Student Kanin Simmons said he enjoys trees at his home.

"We have three trees in our front yard and backyard. They are big trees," he said.

Classmate Sarah Spalding said she has woods in back of her house. She asked the teacher about what kind of trees are in her woods.

"My favorite tree is an apple tree," she said.

At the end of the class session, Tree Lafayette instructor Laura Wright showed the children how to grow a bean plant in a plastic cup with a damp paper towel. Each student was given three beans, a cup and bookmark.

The third-grade teachers received a tote bag and DVD about trees.

Glen Acres teacher Megan Hatke said she appreciates community experts coming to her class.

"The kids seem to pay atten-



Larry Rose with Tree Lafayette arranges youngsters for a photo next to a tulip tree, Indiana's state tree, planted Thursday in a courtyard at Glen Acres Elementary School in Lafayette. It was the final planting of the academic year for the group. (BY JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER)

tion more when there is somebody new in the class," she said with a smile.

Hatke said her students have learned a lot about trees from reading.

"We talked about trees on Earth Day," she said. "I hope the kids remember the importance of trees to the environment, photosynthesis and parts of the tree."

"I hope they are now more aware of trees."

Tree Lafayette began its outreach to elementary schools in 2009.

"This program has been so valuable not only to my stu-



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dents, but to the students in our community," Philyaw said. "They have learned to protect and plant trees but also the importance of renewing our natural resources.

"I hope that this program will not only continue, but will reach many more schools in the Greater Lafayette area."