

PILLOWCASE PROJECT HELPS PREPARE CAWOOD STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR EMERGENCIES



Volunteers from the American Red Cross visited Cawood Elementary School to present The Pillowcase Project to third, fourth and fifth grade students.

"I believe that this was very beneficial and informative to our students," said Melissa Owens, family resource and youth service center director. "Many of the students were already very knowledgeable on what to do in the event of an emergency. The American Red Cross enhanced their learning experience."

The American Red Cross encourages teaching children how to prepare for emergencies to help keep their families and communities safe when emergencies happen.

"That's why they developed The Pillowcase Project, a program that started in New Orleans, where students used pillowcases to carry their belongings during a hurricane emergency," said Owens. "Through a grant from Walt Disney, the Red Cross is distributing pillowcases to children across the country and teaching them how to stay safe in a wide variety of emergency situations."

Through The Pillowcase Project, children learn how to prepare for emergencies, practice what they have learned, and share their knowledge with family and friends, so that, when an emergency occurs, everyone in their family knows what to do and how to help each other stay safe.

"They learned what to do if there is a fire and a tornado," said Owens. "They learned a coping skills of breathing in color. If they think about their favorite color while breathing slowly, it helps them cope with thoughts and feelings if an emergency were to happen."

Owens said students learned they should discuss a safety plan with their families and have a designated place to meet in case of a fire or other emergencies.

Students learned what essential items they should keep in their emergency kit pillowcase. They designed their own pillowcase and was provided a preparedness workbook to share with their families.

They also learned that if their family does not have a working smoke detector in the home, Red Cross officials would come and install one free of charge.

For more on the pillow case project, visit:

<http://www.redcross.org/local/texas/gulf-coast/programs/disaster-preparedness/pillowcase-project>