

Seaford kids go to work!

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Last week, fifth-grade students from both the Seaford Harbor and the Seaford Manor Elementary Schools experienced what it is like to put in a hard day's work at Commerce Plaza.

Since this group of children will be classmates when they enter the Seaford Middle School in September, this trip is one of the events that the schools collaborate on to bring the students together and introduce them to each other.

Located in the Sylvia Packard School building in North Massapequa, Commerce Plaza is a makeshift village complete mayor, realtor, bank, wellness center and more. There's even a McDonald's restaurant.

What a terrific opportunity for the children! They each have jobs, which include bank managers, tellers and loan officers, as well as newspaper editors, reporters, photographers, lawyers and CPAs.

Each company begins its day with a loan from the bank for startup costs and a trip to the warehouse for supplies. Everything is paid for by check (check writing, a good skill to learn) and each company's bookkeepers are kept very busy posting payments and receipts, and writing paychecks. At break and lunchtime all Commerce Plaza citizens make deposits at the bank and have checkups at the wellness center (as part of their benefits package, of course).

As you can imagine, the morning is chaotic, but by 11 a.m. most businesses are up and running.

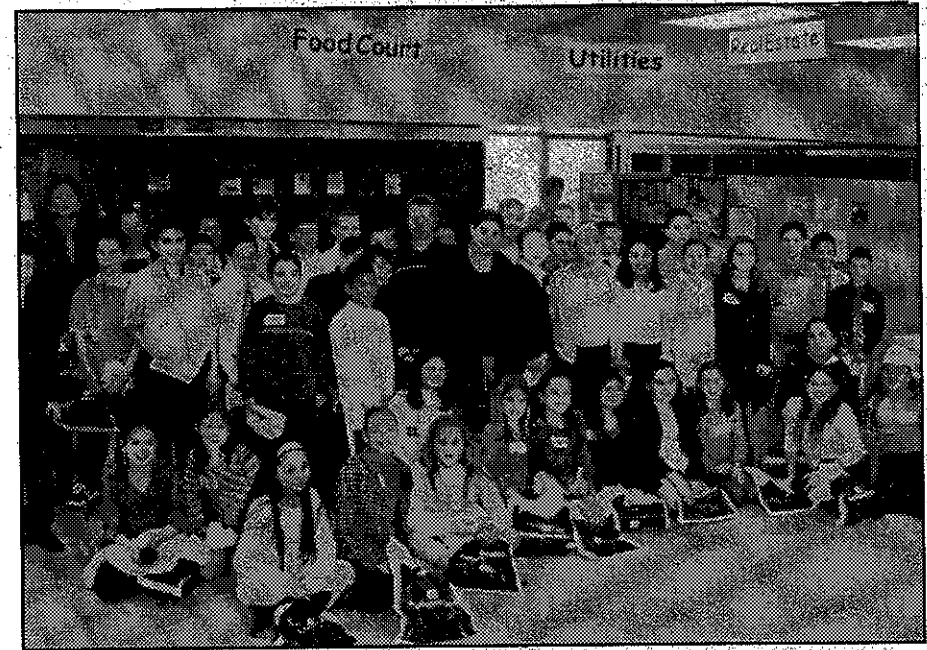
McDonald's employees are busy cleaning after the morning breaks and are gearing up to serve hamburgers, french fries and juice to over 60 people. Tables are wiped down. Floors are swept and gloves are donned in preparation for the "lunch rush."

In the end, Commerce Plaza citizens produced a newspaper and a yellow pages directory, which included a funny new slogan for the Electric Company: We'll brighten your day, just don't forget to pay! The bank made and collected loans and opened savings accounts, and the real estate collected rent for all of the office space. The copy center reproduced menus and more: the phone and electric companies made service calls and installations, and the warehouse provided everyone with supplies. Whew!

While town hall and the wellness center provided not-for-profit services, all the rest of the companies produced profit and loss statements to see how well they managed their money.

To say this was a field trip is an understatement! All the students worked very hard, without complaints, and most were surprised at how much needed to be done. The end of the day arrived quickly and the students returned to their schools with a new appreciation of what's involved in both running a business and a day at work.

Just as the students came together from different schools to become one, they also learned that it takes many parts to make a whole village. Kudos to the staff and students at Commerce Plaza!



AT COMMERCE PLAZA, Seaford students learn by doing.