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### REDEEMER EQUIPS STUDENTS WITH DAILY FOREIGN LANGUAGE

At three and five years old respectively, Redeemer Episcopal Academy students Caleigh and Olivia Bassett are learning a foreign language.

“I love that my daughters receive formal Spanish lessons daily. Both my girls enjoy Spanish class and are so excited each day to teach me the new Spanish words they learned,” said Dr. Julie Bassett, of Cowles Clinic Pediatrics. “My girls are picking up Spanish so rapidly that at this point it’s hard for me to keep up with their Spanish vocabulary.”

From its beginning, Redeemer Academy committed to incorporate Spanish into its daily academic curriculum because of research indicating the benefits of daily foreign language instruction.

“In the past decade, schools have demonstrated increased interest in beginning the study of foreign languages in the early grades. Influencing this trend are a number of national reports urging that the study of languages other than English begin early (Met & Rhodes, 1990),” Marcia Rosenbusch wrote in an article for the Center for Applied Linguistics. “Another influence on the trend toward an early start is research that indicates the early study of second language results in cognitive benefits, gains in academic achievement and positive attitudes toward diversity (Rosenbusch, 1995).”

Using different teaching methods and establishing unique goals for each grade-level, Redeemer Academy Spanish instructor Meredith Jordan excites her students about learning a foreign language.

“The students surprised me with how fast they grasped a foreign language. They are not scared to try something new as many older people are,” said Jordan. “Because the class sizes are small, I am able to work closely with the children.”

At the youngest grade levels, students are learning basic vocabulary including numbers, days of the week and animals. The older students are learning to speak in sentences and took a field trip to El Llano Mexican Restaurant to practice Spanish. At the school’s open house in October, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes performed a skit entirely in Spanish.

Jordan, a graduate of Georgia College and State University, also incorporates cultural information into her lessons. Having gone to Mexico on missions and taken courses at the University of Valladolid in Spain, she understands the importance of learning about the cultures that speak Spanish.

“Every Friday we have Culture Day where we focus on a different Spanish-speaking country. The children have to bring in an interesting fact they researched about the country,” said Jordan. “Through culture day, the students have acquired a broader understanding of the world outside the United States.”

The daily foreign language instruction has expanded the students’ horizons locally.

“My daughters are now very aware that people can speak different languages,” said Dr. Bassett. “When we are out in the community and they hear someone speaking Spanish it just tickles them that they can understand some of what they are hearing.”

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