

PDAC a hit with grade 4s

About 50 grade four students made their way to the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada Annual Convention to have fun in a learning workshop run by Mining Matters, a PDAC sponsored program that brings the wonder of Canada's geology and mineral resources to students, educators and industry.

Michelle, a grade four student at a public school in Thornhill, Ont., learned in a day-long workshop that if you "put acid on a rock, you'll know what kind of rock it is."

Jamie, who attends a public school in York region, said the best part of the workshop was "breaking rocks," which was one of the many hands-on workshop activities.

Grade four students toured the trade show using a scavenger hunt map that sent them to 10 different booths where they asked people questions that helped them on their "hunt."

Following the tour the children returned to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre's North Building for more fun activities.

One matched products with metals and minerals. Did you know, for instance, that limestone is used to make toothpaste or that mica is a main ingredient in eyeshadow?

Another activity tested the heat conductivity of rocks using ice moulds. Students said that diamonds are some of the best heat conductors.

There were also exercises in flotation.

"I learned that you could sort rocks and minerals with water," Jamie said.

Kids learned about the three main types of rocks: igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic and then formed rock collections using the samples.

The point was driven home by Stewart Hamilton and Craig Ravnaas of the Ontario Geological Survey, who talked about working with rocks. Their rock hammers were a big hit!

Sally Cohen, a teacher with the York Region District School Board, attended the workshop and likes the Mining Matters curriculum but wishes it was offered completely in French. At the moment only parts of the curriculum are translated.

"I teach in a French immersion school so we need it to be translated at some point," Cohen said. "I used it but I had to pick and choose. Otherwise, I had to translate everything myself."

She added: "Last year, I taught without it. I didn't have any rock samples and I didn't really understand everything myself. I know a little bit but I'm not a geologist. It told me everything so it was useful that way. I didn't realize how many different rocks and minerals we use in our everyday lives."

Elizabeth Pereira, a private school teacher in Richmond Hill, Ont., says the Mining Matters curriculum is highly versatile.

“Even the (English as a second language) children are able to understand this program. We also run an enriched program. (The curriculum) covers all of our programs,” Pereira said.

The student workshop was sponsored by IBK Capital.