Sun shines on Earth Day festivities

Students enjoy outing on Path to Nature

By JULIE FREDERICK
For the Rocket

Photo by Julie Frederick

PICK ME, PICK ME– Fourth-graders from Priceville Elementary express their desire to help Huntsville Mayor Loretta Spencer plant a tree on Earth Day.

Despite the possibility of severe weather, Mother Nature smiled on Redstone's 11th annual Earth Day event Thursday.

A sunny day with a slight breeze and a chorus of chirping birds was the perfect backdrop for the event at the Path to Nature. The cheerful sounds of 150 elementary school children blended in harmoniously.

Who knew an educational event could be so much fun?

"We try to give them some information they can use about cultural and natural resources," said Danny Dunn, branch chief for Cultural and Natural Resources. "But more than that, we want to get them excited about our cultural resources, like wetlands and fish and wildlife, by being outside running, playing and enjoying nature."

The teachers appreciate a chance to get the kids out of the classroom, according to Ann Taylor, a fourth-grade teacher at Priceville Elementary.

"This is our third year to bring students to Redstone and we think it is a real honor and privilege to get to come out here," she said. "We really love the activities that they plan for us, and the kids just have a really great day when we come out."

Huntsville Mayor Loretta Spencer joined in on the celebration. She spoke to the children about the importance of protecting the Earth and its natural resources. She reiterated how even the simple tasks of picking up litter to keep communities clean or planting a new tree would benefit the environment. To follow through on her statement, Spencer, with the help of two students, planted a dogwood. This was her 11th tree to help plant at the Path to Nature.

The young students seemed to gain an appreciation of natural resources.

"Earth Day is important because it helps remind us that we need to protect all the animals by not trying to kill them," fourth-grader Taylor Wright said.

Staff ecologist Gabby Ehinger led the Earth Day event. "This is a great opportunity for local school kids to see the natural resources that Redstone has to offer," she said.