For Immediate Release

Ag Day Steers Student Curiosity Toward Agriculture

April 29, 2019 – Livermore, CA - Traveling in groups, moving from a station about planting seeds to one demonstrating wool spinning, third grade students from throughout Livermore craned their necks to get a peek at all the activity around them. Behind them was a sheep shearing, to their left a fresh-produce salsa bar, ahead of them a cowboy campsite – wherever the students’ eyes landed suddenly became the most interesting thing happening in their orbit. It was the 4th Annual Ag Day, hosted at Livermore High School (LHS) on April 23, 2019, where third graders arrived on buses to explore the role of agriculture in their daily lives and in their own community.

The event, developed by Livermore Sanitation Community Relations Manager Sheila Fagliano, was designed to inspire and educate youth by providing opportunities for students to explore agriculture and its multitudes of offerings, demonstrating its role in the community as well as the commodities and careers it generates. LHS, the only high school in Alameda County with an Agriculture department, is the natural place to feature and celebrate Livermore’s proud agricultural heritage and the field’s ongoing role in community members’ daily lives. LHS Agriculture students and Future Farmers of America (FFA) volunteers guided students on their tour through the world of agriculture.

Students were astonished to discover the variety of ways agriculture interacts with their world – from their food to their clothes. For many, it was an eye-opening opportunity to see and participate firsthand in the processes that ensure fresh food reaches their plates, cultivate the land around them, and produce materials they use every day. A group stood mesmerized in front of the spinning wheel, peppering the yarn spinner with questions: “Is this how clothes are made? How did you learn to do this? How long does it take?”

Meeting the people who were sharing their passion made an impact on how the students perceived the field of agriculture. It was one thing to pet the cow, the horse, and the rabbit; but having the opportunity to engage with the professionals and volunteers active in husbandry helped bridge the gap between common products and where they come from. The event furnished students with an appreciation for the people and skills involved in their well-being. Students were awed watching a farrier hammer out a horseshoe on an anvil and seeing it fitted to a real horse - their ideas about the labor of horses and their caretakers shifting from abstract to strikingly real.

“This is so good!” exclaimed students as they sampled salsa prepared from local fresh produce by Del Valle Continuation High culinary students. The deceivingly simple ingredients, along with being tasty, provided insight into the work that goes into some common dishes loved by the students in the cafeteria and at home. Students stopped by stations detailing beef and dairy production, and another that featured Stewie the inspection dog, who
sniffed out produce in packages. “Our job is to protect California agriculture,” explained the inspector, who identifies harmful pests in mailed agriculture.

By emphasizing the relationship between people, animals, and the land, Ag Day provides a visible connection to their community for students who may not have fully appreciated the knowledge and skills that contribute to their nutrition, shelters, and comfort. This event is an opportunity to showcase the value of LHS’s unique programs and its commitment to advancing agricultural education for future generations. It also serves to enlighten younger students about their community’s past, present, and future association with the field. The rich legacy of agriculture in Livermore will continue with the very students who first tried their hand at lassoing and enjoyed fresh vegetables at Ag Day.

Photos courtesy of LVJUSD and Livermore Granada Boosters; additional photos available at Livermore Granada Boosters website

Photo 1: Plastic steer lassoing activity
Photo 2: Students getting to know some of the farm animals
Photo 3: Tractor exhibit
Photo 4: Farrier lets students pass around a horseshoe
Photo 5: Yarn spinning demonstration

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ABOUT LIVERMORE VALLEY JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
LVJUSD is an award-winning district that serves more than 13,900 students in transitional kindergarten through 12th grade at nine elementary campuses, two K-8 schools, three middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and two alternative schools. The LVJUSD features International Baccalaureate Programmes and a STEM pathway, TK-12. The mission of the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District is to ensure each student will graduate with the skills needed to contribute and thrive in a changing world. For more information about the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, please visit www.livermoreschools.org

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