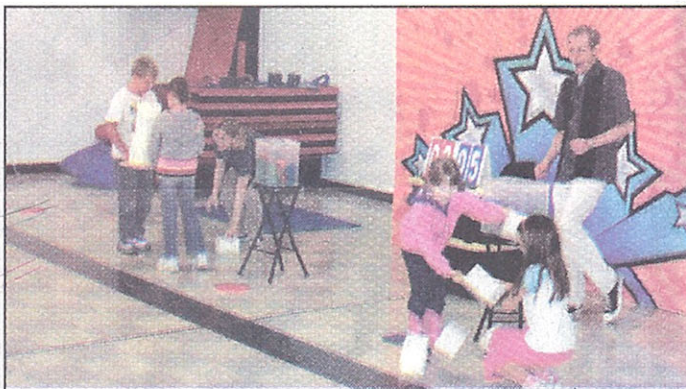


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Giving it all to be a 'Super U'

**MONROE
ELEMENTARY
KIDS LEARN HOW
NOT TO BE A
BULLY**

BY FRAN ODYNEC
Managing Editor

Coming in single file, they filled the gym under the watchful eyes of their teachers last Wednesday morning.

As they took their places by grade on the gym floor, a low din began to build among the 285 or so Monroe Elementary School students who would soon learn what it takes to be a "Super U."

"Super U" is a 45-minute interactive program designed by Midwest School Assembly



Monroe Elementary students, top left, are all eyes as the "Super U" show unfolds in the school's gym. The red team, top right, inches closer to the finish line in the tower build exercise while the red team's tower topples. Both teams, above, engage in passing slippery water batons.

PHOTOS BY FRAN ODYNEC/THE PLAIN CITY ADVOCATE

Presenters to demonstrate what it takes to be a good student and member of the community instead of bullying fellow students and friends into doing things they may not want to do.

Chris and Brandy Linn were the hosts of "Super U," and wasted no time in gaining the assembly's nearly undivided attention. He explained to them that they would be taking the "Super U" challenge,

but it was not going to be a quiz show. The challenge would follow along what they are used to seeing on Nickelodeon.

That brought a rather loud cheer of approval.

Chris raised the volume even higher when he announced, "There will be a little bit of slime as well."

The kids roared a resounding "Yaaay" which quickly turned into a somewhat deflated

"Awwwww" when Chris told them, "A little bit later, but not right now."

It was time to get on with the show by telling them that "Super U" is "all about being the best you can be."

"Super U" means you and you and you and everybody back there," he said pointing to as many

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in the audience as possible.

The kids were about to participate in five activities that are designed to show:

- The positive power of Super Heroes
- The results teamwork can generate
- The importance of mutual trust
- Respect for others
- Not going against the wishes of others

And, to make things real interesting, the audience was divided down the middle into the red team and the blue team.

For each of the activities, Chris and Brandy searched the audience for volunteers, a search that not once came up short on willing kids. Once chosen, the volunteers would represent their respective teams up at the stage area and compete for points, which had the audience on the edge of their seats, err... knees.

The first activity, "Instant Super Hero," was a race to see which one of the two volunteers would suit up as a Super Hero faster than the other one.

"Super Heroes use the powers they have to do good," said Chris, "not to cause harm." He added, "We can choose to make sure we won't hurt anyone's feelings."

The guy from the blue team beat the girl from the red team 5 to 2 in the suit up. Next up was an exercise in teamwork that, once again, pitted the red team against the blue team.

This time, each team had to build a tower out of foam blocks and then carry them slowly to the finish line without having them topple over.

"If it does," said Chris. "You have to go back to the beginning and start over."

With a dose of trust, the two teams of two volunteers each began to build, and then rebuild, and rebuild again, before one of them reached the finish line. All the while the audience was a fever's pitch cheering on their teams.

The blue team made it to the finish line pushing the blue lead to 10 to 7.

"You have to trust your friends and build your trust," Chris said of the tower building segment. "It takes just one dishonest thing to ruin that trust and you have to start way back at the beginning to rebuild it."

Then it was time for the baton pass; not just any ordinary baton but a slippery water baton that needed some respect.

Two teams of four volunteers each would pass baton after baton down the line to the last person who would then try as best as he or she could to hold onto all those batons. The winner would be determined by the number of batons the fourth person in line could hold without dropping



It was sitting room only for the "Super U" show last Wednesday morning at Monroe Elementary School in Plumwood. Host Chris Linn welcomes students and teachers to the show.

them. And the other three in line had to treat the batons with respect so that they wouldn't fall to the floor, thus decreasing the chance to win.

"Treat others the way you want to be treated," Chris told the volunteers, "and work together as a team."

The teams had 30 seconds to see what they could do.

With the audience at a high pitch, the "pass" was on.

In the end of all the batons each team had passed down the line, the last two kids in each line had held onto nine batons each. As a result,

the blue team held onto its three-point lead, 19 to 16.

At last, it was slime time which brought the audience to a level of energy that was pushing at the roof of the gym.

This event was focused not just on slime but also on respecting the wishes of others.

After a slime containment tarp had been placed down in the stage area, four more volunteers were chosen. "This is all about having some fun with friends," said Chris. "Fun because our volunteers said it was OK. It wouldn't be fun if they didn't want to do it any more."

He made the point to which the entire show was leading.

"If a friend asks me to stop, it's important that you stop," he continued as he set the stage for slime. "Otherwise, it is no longer about having fun and you risk going from being 'Super U' to a bully. That makes you feel like slime on the inside."

He also said that if someone needs help when the other person is being a bully, "Call in a side-kick to solve a conflict or situation. Two Super Heroes are better

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The red team beat the blue team 26-24, but together Chris Linn said that 50 points was the highest of any school so far this year.

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than one.”

With two of the volunteers seated and protected from slime dripping down onto their clothes, the other two were each standing with a container of green slime ready to pour it into a container with holes at its base that had been placed on each head of the seated volunteers. “The one who gets the most slime into the container wins,” said Chris, and the pouring began amidst cheering that could be heard all over Plumwood.

At the buzzer, the red team had forged ahead of the blue team for a final score of 26 to 24.

But Chris didn’t really look at it as though one team had beaten the other.

“Take 26, take 24, add them together and you get 50!” he exclaimed.

Those 50 points made Monroe the highest scoring school so far this year, according to Chris and Brandy’s calculations.

When Chris and Brandy told the kids to give themselves a big round of applause, those 285 or so students more than obliged.

As the students filed out of the gym and back to their classrooms, Monroe Principal John Lanka was seated during the “Super U” show behind the audience.

“We had fun,” he said. “Now it’s important how we follow up in conversations with the kids.”

He said that the show helped

set the stage.

“Our ultimate goal is for the kids to be aware of their role to be supportive of each other through their values, expectations, and behavior,” he said.

Monroe Elementary has “4 Cool Rules for School.” Two of those rules the “Super U” show repeated time and again: • Be nice with your words and actions • Respect adults and peers alike

As Chris Linn said before the show, “We want the kids to be the best U they can be, the best kid, the best student, and the best community member.”

It all seemed to fall in line with a banner that overlooks the gym and is emblazoned with the slogan: “We’re building a better world, one student at a time.”



It’s slime time as both teams wait for Chris Linn to say, “Pour the slime.”