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Schools plan treasure hunt



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Students in the Leapin' Lizards After School Program at Pierce and Inyokern elementary schools will be going on treasure hunts in order to close out their unit on navigation.

For the past several weeks, the students in the program have been learning about coordinates, compass directions, waypoints and other skills centered in navigation. As the culmination of the lessons, they will be doing a geocaching "hide and seek" event.

The Inyokern Elementary event will be on Wednesday, April 1, starting at 4 p.m., and Pierce Elementary's will be on Thursday, April 2, at 4:30 p.m.

Geocaching is a form of recreational treasure hunting where people use GPS to search for caches in public areas. The caches are typically waterproof containers, like bottles, plastic storage containers or sealable boxes. Inside the cache, people tend to place small items, like toys, messages, plastic coins or other simple trinkets. Hunters are given clues and the cache's geographic coordinates to help in their search.

The caches are, typically, hidden somewhere "in plain sight," unobtrusive and out of the way but not requiring any real work - like digging - to find.

In mainstream geocaching, people put the coordinates and clues for caches into an online database for others to find. The rule is people are not to keep the caches once they are found, though they can sometimes trade items inside; the cache will have a logbook inside for hunters to sign and date before putting it back where they found it. Sometimes people finding the cache will leave a new item inside the container.

While Pierce's event will only be for the families of after-school program students, Inyokern's is being incorporated into a family night for the school as a whole. Families at both schools will be able to use GPS units, compasses and other tools to help find the caches hidden by the teachers.

Shellie Oney, director of Pierce Elementary's after-school program, said the caches would be hidden and clues set up based on landmarks around the school. According to information about the events, the caches will be "filled with fun tasks, jokes, riddles, gags and prizes."

Faller Elementary School, the other school in the Leapin' Lizards family, had its own geocaching event earlier in March.

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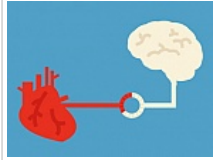
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