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Firefighter turned author, spreads fire safety awareness in Magnolia

By **CHRISTINA HAYDEN**

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In honor of Fire Prevention week, Houston firefighter and author Jeff Cook visited the elementary campuses in Magnolia to spread the message about fire safety.

Cook began the hour by reading from his book "Tails from the Firehouse" and by getting the kids to interact with questions and answers.

Cook said he wrote the book in hopes of getting the message of fire safety and prevention to kids in a fun, yet effective way. The book outlines fire safety tips through a Dalmatian named Tails, who lives at a firehouse.

"I've been in the fire service for over 30 years and the statistics of children burned and injured are pretty overwhelming," he said.

Cook said his inspiration for writing the book came from his many years as a firefighter and seeing how the current method of teaching fire safety was not really working.

Cook said that the usual material for educators teaching about fire safety can sometimes be a bit dry in content, which is why he felt a fun variation needed to be written, so the message hopefully stays with the kids.

"I kind of trick them into learning," Cook said.

After reading from the book, Cook quizzes the children on fire safety and shows them what a firefighter looks like in full uniform, in order to teach the children that firefighters are not scary and not to hide from them.

The children each go home with a packet that goes over the need for a fire escape plan and checking the batteries in smoke detectors.

Lyon Elementary Librarian Carie Sabo said students really respond to Cook and it is clear how dedicated he is to the safety of kids.

"We just wanted to provide our students with the best that we could find available for fire prevention," she said. "We are so grateful to have him."

Cook said the ultimate success to come from the book and his efforts is kids having greater knowledge of fire safety and what to do in the event of a fire.

Through the years Cook has volunteered his much of his time to children through multiple programs. Cook has been a camp counselor at Camp Janus which is program put on for burn survivors ages five through 18. Cook has also been involved with the Houston Firefighters Burned and Crippled Children's Fund since 1993.

For more information about Cook or his book visit www.tailsfromthefirehouse.com.



Houston firefighter and author Jeff Cook reads from his book "Tails from the Firehouse" to the children of Lyon Elementary on Oct. 1.



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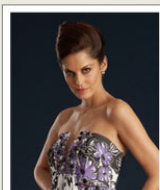
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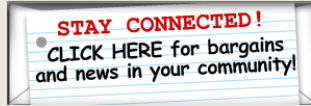
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