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International programs librarians connect with local junior high students

Librarians at the University of Kansas have been thinking young in the days leading up to International Education Week, scheduled for November 17-21 at KU. KU Libraries' Latin American, East Asian and Slavic Studies departments are reaching out to Lawrence's South Junior High School (SJHS) to teach seventh graders about the lands beyond Jayhawk territory.

A recent presentation to the junior high students by Jana Krentz, KU Libraries' Ibero-American bibliographer, included musical instruments and artifacts from Latin America.

"The teachers were very eager to have us visit," Krentz said. "They hadn't realized that KU Libraries had so many K-12 books and resources."

Krentz explained the visit was multi-faceted in that it made teachers aware of KU Libraries' resources and it gave students a chance to experience new cultures firsthand.

She said she was excited by the students' eagerness to learn about and explore other cultures.

"Some geography books can be dry and boring, but we really made it come alive," she said. "They loved the stuff we brought and were very inquisitive. They really liked to see cartoons and hear music from other regions."

Future presentations include a visit from the East-Asian Studies department in February during which students will learn to tie an obi knot on a kimono and instruction in calligraphy. African presentations will take place in November, and Russian presentations will take place in the spring.

Krentz said each department will present its material in a different way. The students are also able to study online materials prepared by the librarians during class time.

Krentz views the SJHS visits as a pilot program. "My goal would be to present to all junior high schools in Lawrence," she said.

KU Libraries will also be celebrating International Education Week with an open house from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesday, November 18 on the third floor of Watson Library.

The open house will feature samples of foods from all over the world as well as live music. The event is free and open to the public.

For more information, please visit: www.lib.ku.edu/IEW.



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