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Preschoolers learn lesson in fighting disease: 'Wash your hands' *American Red Cross spreads the anti-germ message through its 'Scrubby Bear' program for youngsters*

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CHATHAM TWP. - The Colonial Crossroads Chapter of the American Red Cross presented the “Scrubby Bear Hand Washing” program on Tuesday morning, Nov. 17, to students at the Gingham Giraffe Preschool, which operates in Corpus Christi Church at 234 Southern Blvd. in Chatham Township.

The “Scrubby Bear” program teaches young children how to properly wash their hands with soap and water, as well as to make hand washing a part of their daily routine.

“Despite its simplicity, frequent hand washing is one of the most effective ways to prevent colds and respiratory illnesses like the flu, according to the Centers for Disease Control,” said Leigh Pafford, preparedness sales and marketing manager for the chapter for the Colonial Crossroads Chapter, which has offices in Madison and Summit.

“The most common way people catch colds is by rubbing their nose or eyes after touching someone or something that is contaminated with the cold virus,” Pafford noted. “Many illnesses can be prevented, especially among children, merely by stopping the spread of germs.”

‘Always Amazed’

As part of the presentation, Pafford spread “germs” on each child’s hands that could only be seen under an ultra violet light. Children had the opportunity to see how quickly germs can be spread from person to person.

“The kids are always amazed to see how the pretend germs transfer from their hands to their faces,” Pafford said.

“As part of the presentation we discuss how to make sure each hand is washed entirely, and we ask them to keep rubbing their hands together while singing the Happy Birthday song to ‘Scrubby Bear’ – about 30 seconds.”

Last year the Colonial Crossroads Chapter educated more than 1,800 children about the importance

of good hand washing habits in preventing diseases. The program's mascot, "Scrubby Bear," spreads the message, "Don't get sick, wash up quick."

To find out how the "Scrubby Bear Hand Washing" program can be presented at a school or a community organization, contact Leigh Pafford at (908) 273-2076, ext. 17.

The Colonial Crossroads Chapter of the American Red Cross serves Madison, Summit, Chatham Borough, Chatham Township, Florham Park, East Hanover, Long Hill Township, Berkeley Heights, New Providence and Springfield Township. For information, visit www.ccnjredcross.org.

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