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A student learns about making stain-glass windows during John Zapalac's Camp Zap Jan. 27-28.

Camp covers more ground

■ Woodlake Police Chief extends Camp Zap to surrounding communities

By Reggie Ellis
SUN-GAZETTE

Nearly 10 months ago, the Sun-Gazette ran a story about Camp Zap, a camp for adolescents held in the foothills of Lemon Cove at the ranch home of Woodlake Police Chief John Zapalac.

What started as a picnic for Woodlake school children seven years ago, has grown into a powerful tool in educating about 120 youth on the importance of staying in school, making positive choices and respecting their parents and other authority figures like police officer. Zapalac said that many of the students who attend the camp are from low-income families. Most children who attend have never been camping, ridden a horse or been in a canoe. "I think every child should experience the joy of camping," Zapalac said.

Zapalac and his wife, Minerva, continued their tradition on Jan. 27 and 28 with a campout that included hiking, horseback riding, volleyball, basketball, a hayride and a special

demonstration on making stain-glass windows. Zapalac said 68 students from Woodlake were, for the first time, joined by 47 students from other school districts, including 12 from Stone Corral Elementary School and 35 from Steve Garvey Jr. High School in Lindsay.

"It was a great weekend and

we didn't have any problems between students from different communities," Zapalac said. "The kids all enjoyed themselves and had fun meeting others from different communities."

Zapalac said he started reaching out to other school districts about six months ago and Lindsay was the first to send a large group of students. The next Camp Zap will be held at the end of April. Cost of the camp is only \$5 to cover the cost of providing meals. Students are asked to bring a sleeping bag, snacks and an extra change of clothes. For more information, call the Woodlake Police Department at 564-3346.



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Students ride horses, play volleyball, basketball and football at John Zapalac's ranch in the foothills of Lemon Cove.

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