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TLC partners with local business for lesson

by Tom McGee
 Staff Writer
 March 26, 2009

Eddie Zhang is learning that he doesn't need to go far to learn about wildlife.

The sixth-grader participated in an eight-week course titled "What's in Your Backyard" at Total Learning Center in Murrysville, which had him studying the various wildlife that lives in Murrysville.



Photo by Lillian DeDomenic

Patricia Sheahan, director of Total Learning Center, teamed up with Murrysville resident Bill Powers and his PixController business to lead the program. Powers' company sells motion sensor cameras to capture wildlife footage.

The course enabled Eddie to study the animals that live in his backyard.

"It's really cool," Eddie said. "I caught a bunch of raccoons in my backyard."

Besides studying wildlife, he also learned how to build the cameras that Powers' company produces. One of the best parts of the class was learning how the wiring and circuitry of the cameras work, he said.

Powers said he'd like to see the program grow in the future. He said the Westmoreland Conservancy is interested in working with the program to study wildlife on its properties.

"There's a vast amount of land," Powers said.

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Sheahan said the program began as a way to provide Eddie with educational opportunities outside the classroom. Because he enjoyed looking at videos on YouTube, which hosts content from Powers, the program seemed to be the perfect, she said.

Powers and Sheahan said they hope to perfect the course and open it up to more students. Because Eddie was the first student to complete the course, Sheahan said she hopes to have him back to work with other students.

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