



PHOTO/FRED ROBERTSON

Kenneth DeWolfe, a third grader at the Jefferson School, holds up a Frisbee to the sunlight and watches it change color indicating the UV intensity from the sun. Observing the experiment are Maryellen Maguire-Eisen, left, executive director of Sun Protection Foundation, and school nurse Beverly DiGregorio.

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Rockland students get lesson on sun protection

By Max Bowen
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Summer may be over, but Rockland students learned this week the damage the sun can do is a year round concern.

On Tuesday, Maryellen Maguire-Eisen and Rob Gilman, a meteorologist for the Patriot Ledger and WATD, talked to third and fourth graders at Jefferson Elementary School about the dangers posed by the sun. Their foundation, called the Sun Protection Foundation

(SPF), was established in June 2003 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing students' and parents' knowledge of the risks of ultraviolet (UV) overexposure and to modify sun exposure practices.

This was the second year that SPF has been to the Jefferson school. In its first year the SPF visited 10 communities and 16 schools, and this year, Maguire-Eisen, the executive director of the organization, plans to triple that.

"Last year was really hard because no one knew who we were," said Maguire-Eisen.

Children sat attentively as Maguire-Eisen and Gilman explained what the organization was and what it did. She also explained what UV rays are and the types that reach Earth.

The two used an inflatable globe and a large flashlight with a foam cutout of the sun around it to demonstrate how the planet's rotation affects which parts of the globe the sun touches.

Gilman said the time of the year when we get the most UV radiation is in June, and noon-4 p.m. are the times of greatest UV radiation during the day.

"I love doing this. I'm thrilled about the weather," said Gilman. "It's wonderful to work together."

The most impressive part of the presentation was the demonstration of some of the tools used by SPF. The first was a Frisbee that turned purple

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