

‘Bringing science to life’**TROUT****Divine Mercy students hold trout release****BY KELLY URBAN**KURBAN@TRIBDEM.COM

BOSWELL – The weather wasn’t exactly ideal on Friday, but the trout didn’t seem to mind.

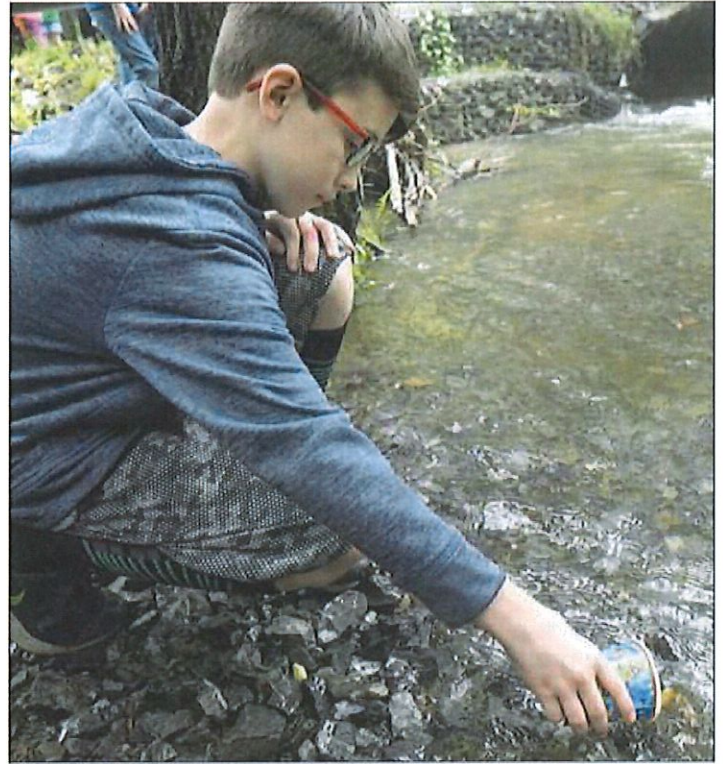
Dodging raindrops, fifth and sixth-grade students from Divine Mercy Catholic Academy released roughly 50 brook trout into Bens Creek at Ferndale Sportsmen’s Club as part of the Trout in the Classroom program, which teaches students how to care for the fish from the egg phase to fingerlings.

The program was being held in partnership with Brandywine Conservancy with support from the Cambria County Conservation District, Stonycreek Conemaugh River Improvement Project, Somerset Conservation District, Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

Marian Cyburt, fifth- and sixth-grade science teacher at DMCA’s East campus, said the program provides students with an experience where they learn by doing.

“The fish tanks are integrated into our classrooms so that students can watch the fish grow, observe changes to their habitats, monitor the water quality and see how water quality can affect aquatic life for better or worse,” she said. “The point of the program is to learn about

Please see **TROUT**, A2



Patrick Sakmar, a fourth-grader at Divine Mercy Catholic Academy, releases a trout into Bens Creek at Ferndale Sportsmen’s Club on Friday.

TODD BERKEY/ THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT

‘Bringing science to life’**TROUT**

Continued from A1

the life cycle of the trout, conservation and water quality.”

Cyburt said Trout in the Classroom not only engages students in hands-on learning, but it’s fun for them as

it has ballooned in popularity across the state.

“These kids are responsible for the daily care and maintenance of an aquarium in the classroom and they raise trout from eggs to fingerlings throughout the school year,” she said. “Ultimately, they release them into a state-approved body of water before summer.”

Reckner said she’s hopeful that the students will remember the release day as something fun that they were able connect with.

well.

“Kids get to see them grow and they even name the fish, but they’re also learning science,” she said. Annmarie George, a fifth-grader at the DMCA’s East campus, said it’s been enjoyable working on the project.

“We had to work in groups to trout test to make sure they were healthy and doing OK,” she said. “It was really fun because we got to work with others and we got to name each fish.”

George said after spending months with the fish, she was sad to see them go.

“We got to go into the water and we said bye-bye and let them go,” she said.

DMCA’s East campus fifth-grader Katrina McCann said she enjoyed the program because it was the first time she was able to do something like that.

“It was fun to test everything to make sure everything was all right and to feed them,” she said. “We kept them alive pretty well.”

McCann said they learned about the trout’s life cycle from the egg stage to 3- to 4-inch fingerlings.

“This was fun and we were also learning,” she said.

After the release, students participated in six interactive learning stations that included locating and identifying macroinvertebrates from the stream, crayfish, snails, clams and some insects; examining native plant species; locating and identifying amphibians, such as frogs and salamanders; and the basics of fly-fishing in Pennsylvania streams.

Melissa Reckner, program manager at Brandywine Conservancy’s Penguin Court Preserve, said the Trout in the Classroom program was brought to Pennsylvania in 2006 and

“It’s bringing science to life, so I hope the kids develop a strong environmental ethic and carry on the works that groups like mine are doing to preserve and conserve our resources because they are our future leaders,” she said.

Kelly Urban is a reporter with The Tribune-Democrat. Follow her on Twitter @Kelly-Urban25.

Fourth-grader Kaedan Erett checks the water temperature with classmate Adam Radkowski before releasing trout Friday.

TODD BERKEY/ THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT