

## **A Bug's Eye View**

Led by Middle School science teacher Tracy Valenty and Lower School science and technology teacher Kelly Vignale, students got up-close and personal with sundry hairy-legged insects and arachnids thanks to Bugscope, an educational outreach program of the Beckman Institute's Imaging Technology Group.

Winchester Thurston third, fifth, and sixth graders, immersed in one science unit on insects and another on microscopes, collected a wide variety of bugs and shipped them to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; during a series of "virtual field trips" to the university, WT students were able to examine their specimens through an environmental electron scanning microscope at the university.

Students at WT gathered in computer labs and used remote access to link directly to the powerful microscope. In real time, students were able to "drive" the microscope, choosing from an array of their own specimens, and magnify objects as much as 200,000 times their normal size. They were also able to ask questions of a number of scientific experts at the university, who were also logged on to dialog with the students.

"The students were very excited about this project," commented Valenty. "Engaging them in the Bugscope program will help build their appreciation for the world of insects and for scientific research in general. We have been talking about careers in science, and this exposure just broadens their sense of the scope of opportunities out there."

Winchester Thurston students' experience with Bugscope was featured in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* on Tuesday, November 4, 2008. To read more, click here: <http://www.pittsburghpostgazette.com/pg/08309/925115-298.stm>