



Adrian College student Katie Carr, second from right, gives Michener students involved in the "Latino Writing Club" a tour of the Shipman Library on Monday at Adrian College.

Telegram photo by Lad Strayer

Latino school club gets early college visit

By Jennifer Burd
Daily Telegram Staff Writer

ADRIAN — Twelve students belonging to Michener Elementary School's "Latino Writing Club" spent the day Monday at Adrian College rubbing elbows with members of the campus community and presenting their own written work.

The students, all of whom speak Spanish as their primary language, showed off their English writing skills by reading original stories to several Adrian College faculty and students in an afternoon presentation at Mahan Hall.

Having an interested audience will help the students see a purpose for the effort they have put into their writing projects, said Adrian College English professor Richard Koch. He helped develop the Latino Writing Club three years ago with Jean Petterson, Adrian Public Schools writing coordinator.

Fourth-grader Brenda Guerrero, who had written about a family trip to Texas to visit relatives, said she liked reading her work at the college Monday "because you get to express your feelings to other people."

Earlier in the day, the students met Adrian College president Dr. Stanley Caine, heard remarks from some of the college's Latino students

and participated in a discussion of Spanish literature led by John Eipper, Adrian College professor of languages.

Koch said the campus visit also could help the students envision themselves one day attending college.

During a campus tour at the end of the day, third-grader Melissa Aleman said she thought the Shipman Library "is very cool," and said her favorite part of the day was eating lunch with college students in Ritchie Dining Hall.

The Latino Writing Club has met weekly since December, and its members — who also take English as a Second Language classes — have made good progress, Koch said. The group studies all aspects of writing, drawing on published works of children's literature so students can see "what real writers do," he commented.

In its first two years, the Latino Writing Club met at McKinley Elementary, Koch said. This year, it moved to Michener after an invitation from Michener teachers and Principal Mike Barwegen, he noted.

Michener ESL instructor Tania Justavino and the school's reading and literary coach, Janet Jacobs, also have played important roles in developing activities for the students in the club, Barwegen said.

"It's really been nice," Barwegen said of the club. "The kids have enjoyed it."