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## Chamizal News Release

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### **Park's Puppet Program Entertains and Educates Elementary Students for NPS Week**

Over 90 second grade students from Hillside Elementary explored the history surrounding Chamizal National Memorial and the park service mission by participating in a puppet show on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Park staff intentionally used marionettes as a story-telling medium, a practice that pays homage to the Mexican marionette theater traditions of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Using a small but elaborate puppet stage in the memorial's theater, park rangers voice and maneuver artisan-crafted marionettes. They perform "Ask the River", an original allegorical fable that represents the actual story of friendship and diplomatic resolution that Chamizal NM commemorates. According to one park ranger, the success of the performance is owed to the captivating quality of puppets.

"A park ranger can tell kids a history story that will lose their attention pretty quickly," says Michael Groomer, Chief of Interpretation, Educations, and Arts. "But a marionette of a park ranger, such as Ranger Mike, can say the exact same thing and they will understand and actively interact with the puppet. With puppets we can tell the complex story of the Chamizal dispute in a way that children understand and actually enjoy."

As part of National Parks Week, all ninety-five students in the El Paso Independent School District were sworn in as junior rangers in the visitor center after having participated in the puppet show.

Call (915) 532-7273 for more information or visit our website [www.nps.gov/cham](http://www.nps.gov/cham).

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