

# *HOW TO BRING AN AUTHOR TO YOUR SCHOOL*

***GUIDELINES FOR LIBRARIANS AND TEACHERS***



***BY***

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***SCHENECTADY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
LIBRARY MEDIA DEPARTMENT***



# How to Survive an Author Visit

## Overview

Having a real live author (or illustrator) visit your school can be exciting, intimidating and stressful. There is so much to think about and arrange before that special day; but once it comes, it is exhilarating, fun, and yes, still a bit stressful! When you see the excitement on the faces of students, you will know your efforts were worthwhile. We hope that the information in this document will help you to decide to take that big step to bring an author to your school and help make planning the visit much easier.

Why have an author visit your school? Is it worth all the time and money involved? Absolutely! First and foremost, an author visit dramatically increases student interest in reading and writing. If you have class sets of books by the author available for teachers to use with their classes and a variety of titles in the library, students will have the opportunity to become familiar with a work by that writer and do an in-depth author study if they would like. Having read one or more books heightens student interest and follow-up activities such as doing research for reports, book reviews or commercials, posters, etc. makes even more of a connection with the book (s). Being able to look forward to seeing the person behind the book, finding out how that book was created and being able to ask questions or be involved in small group sessions is exciting for students. We have found that students will continue to read books by a visiting author for a year or two after the visit, especially if they had already read one in class. An author visit can also unify the school because many, if not all students are preparing in some way for the experience. Remember: the more familiar students are with the author's books, the more enthusiastic they are for the visit.

There are many things to consider when planning an author visit for your school. Most importantly, of course, is actually obtaining the author. Then you need to determine how you will fund the visit. After the funding is secured, you can start the actual planning with teachers, preparing students and taking care of all the many details that such an event entails.

A great way to find authors is by attending conferences. Reading and library conferences attract lots of authors, many of them fairly new and not yet hard to book or priced out of your budget. If you actually hear an author at a conference, get a chance to chat with him/her, find out how they conduct their visits, and firm up dates and prices, a lot of your work is already done. Keep in mind that just because authors write wonderful books, they are not necessarily good speakers.

So, if you get an opportunity to actually hear an author present at a conference, workshop, public library or another school in the area, you'll have a better chance of ensuring an effective presentation. You can also find authors through publishers, bookstores and organizations such as The Children's Literature Connection. The Capital Region BOCES library list-serv has many announcements about upcoming author visits and you may be able to share expenses with another school that way. Many authors have their own websites that often contain their appearance schedule and references from other schools. A reference is a great tool to use to find out more about how the author deals with students. Email or call one or more of the schools listed and ask how the presentations went. Most people will be happy to give you their opinion - especially if it was wonderful or a total disaster!




When you speak with your author to book the visit (or write or email) make sure you are very clear about the number of sessions that you would like him/her to present, the length of each session and how many students you can put into each session. Some authors only want to work with large groups; others prefer one large group and a few small groups, etc. You will also want to find out if the author needs anything for the presentation such as a slide projector, overhead projector, LCD projector, blackboard, easel, microphone, table, chair, or podium. You will usually get a contract to sign that pertains to the date, number of sessions, honorarium, and expenses. If you are paying your author through BOCES Arts in Education funding, make sure s/he is aware of that well in advance. BOCES usually doesn't pay presenters until several weeks after the event and many authors expect payment the day of the visit. You don't want an unhappy author at your school!! Be very clear about payment procedures.

MONEY is always an issue when booking an author. Most of the authors we have had in Schenectady have averaged about \$1500 - \$1800, including food and lodging expenses. We have had funds donated in the past from the GE Elfun Society, Rotary Club, PTO, Arts in Education Grants, etc. but we usually earn most of our money through fundraising. We have used candy sales and book fair profits to pay for these visits. Some people may not like the idea of fundraising but knowing that the proceeds pay for the author usually smoothes the rough feathers.

Once your author is confirmed and funding is in place there will be a lot to do at school. First of all, you want your students prepared for this visit. Lots of publicity and information given to teachers is a must. The more prepared your students are, the more successful the visit. If you are able to purchase class sets of books that teachers can share, that is a real plus. Many schools spend the whole year continually promoting the visit with students and staff. Most teachers are

very cooperative and plan activities for their classes to prepare for the author. If possible, sell books in advance of the visit and schedule a time for book signing while the author is there. Be sure to check with the author about this. Some authors prefer to sign bookplates prior to their visit and not have a signing time. However, having a book signing is a good way for students to have one-on-one time with the author. If only for a few seconds, that contact is very exciting for them.

**Make sure you have a committee of people to help with the work. Having several people involved makes things go much more smoothly. Ways to divide work can be as follows:**

-  1. **Publicity** – hang posters around the school, contact the newspapers and/or local television stations, put notices in the daily bulletin and parent newsletters, hang signs and banners around the school, make announcements at faculty meetings, send notices to teachers to keep everyone up-to-date with plans. You can also involve students by having them make posters to display. Have a daily trivia contest about the author’s books to win a small prize; sponsor an essay contest for students to win a book, win a lunch with the author or the opportunity to introduce him/her at the assembly, etc.
-  2. **Set up** – Find out what items the author needs, obtain necessary equipment, be sure the auditorium/gym/room is ready BEFORE the author walks in. Make sure all equipment is working. Always, always, always, have water available for your author.
-  3. **Luncheon** – make plans for lunch for your author. You can take him/her out of the building to a restaurant if time allows or have a luncheon for faculty members (and/or selected students). This can be catered by a local deli, high school culinary arts program or pot luck from faculty members.
4. **Photographs** – make sure someone is taking pictures of your day for display later. Be aware that most authors **do NOT** want their presentations videotaped. Please make sure you have permission before whipping out the video camera. This is the main form of livelihood for most authors. Videotaping their presentation to use again or to share decreases their chances of getting future bookings in your district.
5. **Book sales** – books can be ordered directly through the publisher or a local bookstore. Most publishers offer a 40% discount and allow you to pay after the event if you tell them it is for an author appearance. Bookstores usually offer a 20% discount. Make sure you are able to return any books that are not sold.

If your author is coming for more than one day, you will have to arrange for someone to meet him/her at the airport or train station, provide transportation to

and from the hotel each day, take them out to dinner, etc. If you are able to plan your author visit with other schools in the area, you can share transportation and expenses. Make sure the author knows who will be picking him/her up from the hotel the day of your event and what time the driver will be there.

On the day of the visit, make sure someone is acting as host(ess) for the author. Stay with the author; ask if s/he needs coffee, water, to use the restrooms, etc. Do not just point him/her to a room and take off. Introduce him to staff and students. Be sure someone is introducing him/her to the group before they speak. It is also nice to give a small gift from the school before s/he leaves.

After the visit make sure you call BOCES Arts in Education to inform them the visit occurred and fill out necessary paperwork. Pay the bill for books sold and return any unsold books. Display photos of the visit. Provide information, books, ideas for projects, etc. for teachers who would like to do follow-up activities. Request feedback from staff and students. Be sure to send a thank you note to the author. Include any notes or letters from students.

Talk to other people in the area who have had authors visit their schools. They will be able to give you valuable advice as well as suggestions for some dynamic authors to bring to your building.

Good luck and have a great visit!



Author Laurie Halse Anderson at Schenectady High School



Author Neil Shusterman signs books for students at MPMS

# AUTHOR VISITS

## WHY HAVE THEM? WHO BENEFITS?



Author Alane Ferguson at Mont Pleasant Middle School

**From Toni Buzzeo, Author and School Library Media Specialist, Buxton, Maine,**  
<<http://www.tonibuzzeo.com/index.html>>

*Want to be sure that kids are reading? Introduce them to the bookpeople who create books! There is no literacy event quite as exciting and guaranteed to succeed at getting kids involved with books as connecting them with authors or illustrators. There's something so wonderful for all of us in meeting the creators of the books we love, and kids feel that too! That's why those of us who advocate connections with bookpeople put so much focus on connecting kids with authors and illustrators in our libraries and schools.*

**From Rukhsana Khan, "Funding Author Visits for Schools"**  
<<http://www.rukhsanakhan.com/article-authorfunding.htm>>

*One public librarian once told me that children will cherish the memory of an author visit for a long time if not indefinitely. Author visits are vital ways in which children make the connection that books are written by real people. Not only can author visits influence children to seek out and read the books of the author who visited, but they can make kids look at all books in a different light. As such they are a vital tool to promote literacy.*

**From Alison Folos, "Making an Author's Visit Your Best 'Good Time'"**  
<[http://www.teacherlibrarian.com/tlmag/v\\_31/v\\_31\\_5\\_feature.html](http://www.teacherlibrarian.com/tlmag/v_31/v_31_5_feature.html)>

*Author visits make connections. The author connects with the librarian, the faculty and the students, and in turn, we connect with the author. When students and staff are offered up a strong diet of one author's work, it can create a unified interest that transcends grade levels and bridges curricula. Stories speak to people in different ways. Yet it's the person behind the story who pushes the literature into a malleable body of imaginative possibilities. Author visits transform quiet written words from a private exchange between reader and author into a lively community discussion.*

# Planning Author (Illustrator) Visits - A Recap

## Why have an author visit?

- Increases student interest in reading
- Increases students interest in writing
- Increases student interest in illustrating
- Provides a unifying activity/theme for the building

## How to find an author

- Conferences and workshops
- Appearances at public libraries
- Recommendations from other schools
- Recommendations from local booksellers
- Publisher recommendations

## Obtaining funding

- Fundraisers
- (Our Fundraising Contacts:
- John Britz - 877-0272, Scholastic Book Fairs 1-800-526-3343)
- Grants (GE Elfyn Society, Rotary, etc.)
- PTO
- BOCES Arts in Ed

## Booking an author

- Contact author by phone, email or letter to book date
- Ask about honorarium and expenses (Make sure they accept BOCES Arts in Education payments).
- Be clear about number of sessions, length of sessions, types of sessions (Will it be a large group session or small group workshop?)
- Ask what author will need for presentations
- Ask if author has any dietary restrictions or requirements
- Coordinate with other schools to share expenses
- Arrange transportations, lodging, meals, etc. if necessary
- Provide clear directions if author is driving to school
- Give author the schedule for the day(s) well in advance

## Preparing for visit at school

- Form a committee with other teachers to help with preparation and implementation
- Fill out and send in BOCES Arts in Education Scheduling form as soon as you have a date and prices; send a copy to district Arts in Ed. office
- Publicize the visit: posters, info to teachers, info in school newsletter, book marks, posters, media coverage
- Order class sets of books for prior reading and background work before the visit
- Prepare web quests, book talks, etc.
- Prepare schedule for the day
- Select and rehearse students (or someone else) to introduce the author

- Make sure teachers know when to bring their students to the assigned location
- Arrange luncheon or go out for lunch. Be sure you have help for set-up and clean-up
- Order books from publisher or bookseller to sell during visit.
- Make bookmarks to give out to students with information about the author
- Conduct essay contests, trivia contests, poster contests, etc. with small prizes (candy, bookmarks, etc.) or larger prizes of a book by the author to keep student interest high

## Set up

- Set up the rooms you are using with needed equipment prior to author's arrival
- Make sure all equipment is working.
- Make lists and passes for students attending small group sessions.
- Be sure to have bottled water available during presentation.
- Have someone assigned to take pictures of presentations for display later (do NOT videotape without permission)
- Make arrangements for announcements to be made calling classes to presentations
- Have volunteers to set up for lunch (and clean-up)

## The Day of the Visit

- Make sure someone is picking up the author to bring to school if she is not driving herself.
- Make sure you have beverages available
- Identify someone to serve as a host (ess) for the author, escorting her to scheduled presentations, etc.
- Schedule enough time for lunch, breaks, book signing, etc.
- Identify and set up a place for book signing. Note: Some authors prefer to have a slip of paper in each book with the child's name on it.
- Have the author sign some labels for books sold after the event. (This will accommodate late purchases)
- Bring author back to hotel (if she is staying overnight), to airport, etc. Make sure she has dinner arrangements either with or without you.
- It is nice to give the author a gift from the school at the end of the day. Consider having a gift presented by a student. Some ideas for gifts are: flowers or plant, a book of local interest, tee shirt/sweatshirt/hat/mug with your school logo, scrapbook of student letters to author, note cards or mug highlighting something of local interest. You can find some Schenectady-related items at The Open Door Bookstore or Proctor's Theatre Gift Shop.

## After the Visit

- Call BOCES Arts in Ed to inform them that the Author visit took place.
- Fill out and send in BOCES School Report form; send a copy to district Arts in Ed. office
- Pay bill for book sales; return unsold books.
- Display photos of visit.
- Provide information and materials for teachers who would like to do follow-up activities.
- Request feedback from teachers and students.
- Send thank you note to author. Include any notes from students.
- Send thank you notes (with pictures of the day if available) to any groups that provided funding for the event.

## Avoid Pitfalls:



- Make sure students are prepared for the visit. Ideally, they will have read work(s) by author and/or completed an author-related activity prior to the visit. The number one complaint by authors is that students have no idea who they are. The more prepared students are, the more engaged they will be for the presentation.
- Be sure staff is aware of the visit, have a schedule of the presentations, and include them in the luncheon if they are interested.
- Have books by the author available for students and staff to purchase.
- Be sure to schedule enough time for lunch, book signing and breaks
- Make sure you and the author are clear about costs, schedule and arrangements for transportation, lodging and meals.
- Be sure the author knows the method of payment (check provided on day of visit or later payment through BOCES) in advance.
- Be sure all paperwork is filed immediately so author can be paid.



Holocaust survivor and author Marion Blumenthal Lazan at Mont Pleasant



Author Dan Gutman signs books at Mont Pleasant

# The Perfect Author Visit - Reproduced with author's permission



When kids get the chance to meet the author of a book they've read, a special connection is made. They are energized, inspired, touched with a new appreciation for reading. I know, because I've visited hundreds of schools in the last few years. I've had many wonderful days doing author visits, and a few miserable ones. I thought it might be useful if I spelled out clearly what schools can do to make an author visit successful.

## THINGS TO DO IN ADVANCE

- Usually, it comes down to how much preparation the librarian, teachers, PTA, and principal put into the day. Here are some suggestions...
- Tell the students the author is coming. It sounds obvious, but I have walked into auditoriums and found that students didn't know who I was or why I was there. Nobody bothered telling them! You don't have to roll out a red carpet or anything, but DO make the kids aware of the upcoming author appearance starting at least a month in advance. Put the author's books on display in the school library. Put a display of book covers up in the hallway.
- Have classes read the books and write book reports or think up questions to ask the author.
- Throw a contest and have the winners receive autographed books.
- Have an art class make posters, banners, and bookmarks welcoming the author.
- Have a writing class write reviews of the author's books.
- Arrange for the students on the school paper to interview the author.
- Call the local newspapers. Maybe they'll send a photographer to cover the event. If they don't, take pictures yourself and submit them.
- If the author writes about a specific subject, make it into a theme day at school. For instance, I write about sports, and schools often allow the kids to wear team caps and T-shirts on the day I visit.
- Talk it up. The more excited you are, the more excited the kids will be. And when the kids are excited, any message the author gives them will really hit home.

There are a few other things you should do for the author in advance of the visit.

- Write out CAREFUL directions to the school.
- Discuss what time the first assembly will be, how many assemblies will be given, how long they will be, and how many students will attend each one. Some authors prefer to talk to the whole school at once, others prefer intimate groups. Some will only do their presentation once or twice in a day. Certainly don't ask an author to do it more than four times. It's impossible to keep the energy level up.
- Discuss the grade range. Some authors give a presentation that sails over the heads of grades K-2. Picture book authors and illustrators may only do K-2.
- Find out exactly what the author will need in terms of equipment—a slide projector, screen, chalkboard, extension cord, etc. Have a microphone ready if the room necessitates it or the author is softspoken. A glass of water or cool drink soothes a raw throat. Get

everything ready in advance so nobody has to scramble around looking for things as the kids are filing into the auditorium.

- Send a letter of confirmation with the date of the visit and fee clearly indicated. Include the school phone number in case of emergency.

## ON THE DAY OF THE VISIT

- **Lunch.** It's nice to give the author lunch, even if it's a cafeteria lunch. What I really enjoy is when the school chooses 5-10 motivated kids and awards them "Lunch with the Author." They set us up in a room with pizza or sandwiches and we have a great time. The kids feel special, and I get to bounce my latest ideas off them. If you prefer the author make his own lunch plans, let him know in advance. The worst idea is to make no arrangements at all and simply tell the author to go get something to eat and come back later (This has happened to me.).
- If the author will be giving multiple presentations, try to do them at one location. It's difficult to move equipment from room to room quickly to set up for successive talks.
- Don't expect the author to discipline students. Some kids are going to act up. If a student is disruptive, have someone step in and take care of the situation. Have the teachers present during the program.
- Pay the author on or before the day of the visit. Don't make the author have to track somebody down at the end of the day and ask for the check. And don't ask the author to donate his or her fee to the school (This has also happened to me). It puts the author in the position of saying no and feeling guilty about it after putting in a hard day of work.
- **Autographs.** Sometimes kids crowd around the author like he's Elvis and ask to have their notebooks, casts, caps, and foreheads signed. Other times, it doesn't occur to them to ask for autographs. Discuss this with the author in advance. Some don't want to sign anything but books. Others won't sign paperbacks. I think every kid who wants an autograph should get one, whether they buy a book or not. Just in case, have the author sign a few autographs and run a bunch off on a copier. The one time autographs DON'T work is when you have one group of kids leaving the room and the next group coming in. The author usually needs this time to straighten things up, sip a drink, and catch a breath. Don't put the author in the position of having to tell the kids he can't sign right now. Have a faculty member do it.

## AFTER THE VISIT

- Have the kids write about the visit, or write a class letter to the author.
- When you bring an author to your school, you are not only helping your students, you are also supporting the art of writing. With the exception of a few famous names, most authors are struggling to pay their bills. Visiting schools is very often the only way we can afford to continue creating books.
- There are a few things you can do that the author might really appreciate. Invite educators from neighboring schools to watch the presentation. If the author is good, write him or her a letter saying so. It can be used to get future bookings. Tell other principals, librarians, and teachers about a successful visit. And keep the kids informed when the author's future books are published.

## TO SELL OR NOT TO SELL

- The reason to bring an author to your school is obviously to promote literacy. I have visited schools that have a policy against selling my books to their students. Personally, I feel that if you don't give students an opportunity to get the author's books, there's no point in bringing an author to the school. Others disagree.
- In any case, authors ASSUME that autographing books will be part of the day. If that's not in the cards, discuss it with the author in advance. There's no doubt it's a hassle coordinating book orders, handling money, and so on. Your PTA will often help with these chores and possibly handle the whole thing for you. The author and his or her publishers should also help (they're selling books, right?). They can provide order forms to send home with the kids, publicity photos, book covers, posters, and other information. Most publishers offer a 40% discount to schools, bringing a \$15 hardcover down to \$9 and a \$3 paperback down to \$1.80. At that price, any child can afford a book if he or she wants one.
- For me, visiting schools has been the most successful and rewarding thing I've done since I started writing. Not only do I get paid for my time and create fans for my books, but I have seen how I can really make a difference in a young person's life.

When I visited the Churchill School in Fairfield, New Jersey, they held an essay contest to determine who would have lunch with me. This essay from a boy named Ricky Ponsart really warmed my heart...

*"I would like to have lunch with Dan Gutman because he got me going to read books more often since I used to be a couch potato and never worried about reading. But now I know reading is as fun as TV or even better. I especially like Dan Gutman's books which really make me laugh. I am now reading more than any other part of my life thanks to Dan Gutman."*



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## REFERENCE SITES FOR AUTHOR VISITS

<http://www.visitingauthors.com/>

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/tradebooks/authorvisits/index.htm>

[http://www.galeschools.com/sleeping\\_bear/](http://www.galeschools.com/sleeping_bear/)

<http://www.societyofauthors.net>

## AUTHORS WHO HAVE VISITED SCHENECTADY SCHOOLS

NAME	WEB SITE	RECOMMENDED LEVEL
JENNIFER ARMSTRONG	<a href="http://www.jennifer-armstrong.com">http://www.jennifer-armstrong.com</a>	Ideal for smaller groups -MS/HS
LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON	<a href="http://www.writerlady.com">http://www.writerlady.com</a>	MS/HS
JIM BRUCHAC	<a href="http://www.ndakinna.com/james2.html">http://www.ndakinna.com/james2.html</a> -	E/MS
ANN BURG		E
BRUCE COVILLE	<a href="http://www.brucecoville.com/">http://www.brucecoville.com/</a> -	E/MS
CHRISTOPHER PAUL CURTIS -		UPPER E/MS/HS
ALANE FERGUSON	<a href="http://www.alaneferguson.com-">http://www.alaneferguson.com-</a>	E/MS/HS
DAN GUTMAN -	<a href="http://dangutman.com-">http://dangutman.com-</a>	E/MS
GORDAN KORMAN -	<a href="http://gordonkorman.com">http://gordonkorman.com</a>	MS
MARION BLUMENTHAL LAZAN - Holocaust survivor	<a href="http://www.fourperfectpebbles.com-">www.fourperfectpebbles.com-</a>	E/MS/HS
BEN MIKAELSEN	<a href="http://www.benmikaelsen.com">http://www.benmikaelsen.com</a> -	MS/HS
NEAL SHUSTERMAN	<a href="http://www.storyman.com">http://www.storyman.com</a>	MS/HS
WILLIAM SLEATOR	<a href="http://www-2.cs.cmu.edu/~sleator/billy/">http://www-2.cs.cmu.edu/~sleator/billy/</a>	MS/HS
CHARLES R. SMITH	<a href="http://www.charlesrsmithjr.com">http://www.charlesrsmithjr.com</a> -	MS/HS

## VIRTUAL VISITS AND VIDEO CONFERENCES

Face to Face and Virtual Visits - <http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic111.htm>

Ben Mikaelson - <http://www.benmikaelsen.com>

### A NOTE ABOUT VIDEO CONFERENCING

Something to consider if you don't have enough funding for an author visit or just have one class working on a particular author is having a videoconference. There are many authors who are now doing video conferencing with very good results. Students can ask questions with immediate answers and the author can tailor a presentation just for your group. The above web sites have more information. We have conducted video conferences with Ben Mikaelson and it was a great experience. If there is no information on the web site of an author you are interested in, you can call or email him/her to inquire if he could do a videoconference and what the price would be.

## SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR AUTHOR VISITS

The following pages contain ideas activities and examples of various documents created for author visits.

### Included are:

Welcoming the author activity (see below)

A sample schedule with information for teachers

A sample announcement; sample bookplate

A sample planning memos (shows organizing details)

Sample passes for small group/writing workshop

Sample luncheon invitation

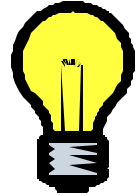
Suggestions for student activities

Sample web quest using an author web site

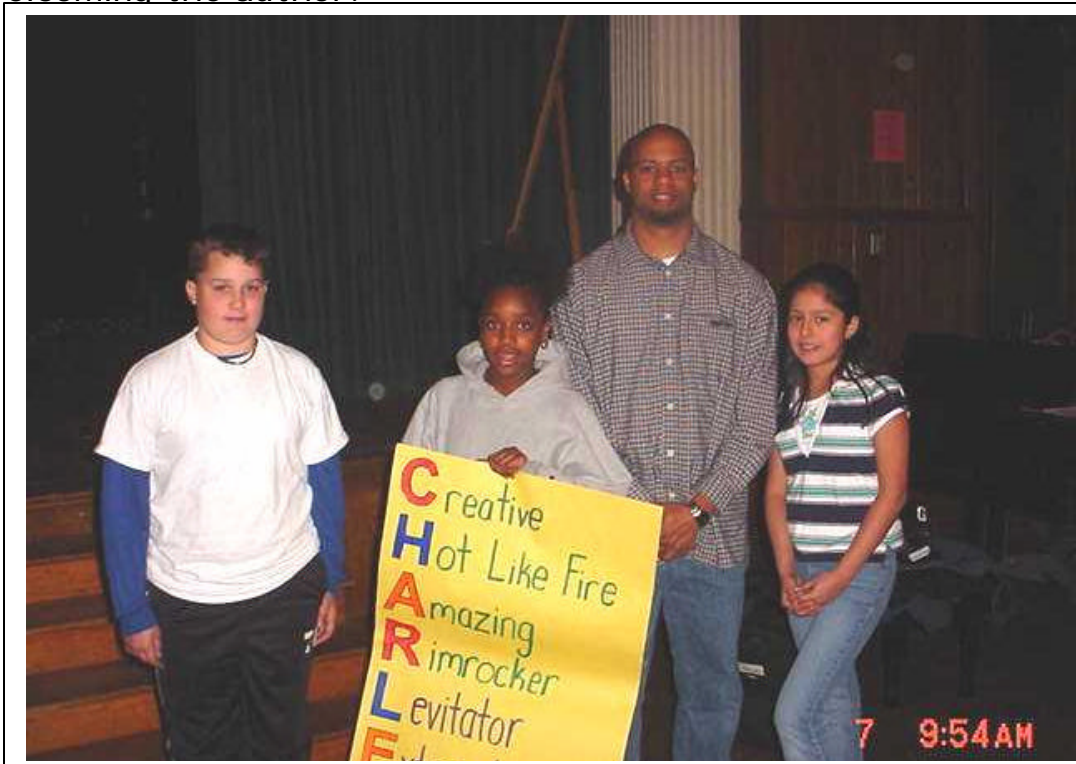
Two samples of newsletter articles

Author bookmarks

Feel free to use or change these pages to suit your needs.



### Welcoming the author:



Author/poet/photographer Charles R. Smith Jr. at Mont Pleasant Middle School



## Sample Schedule for Author/Illustrator Visit

8:45 Author Arrives

Greeted by Jane Smith in the front lobby.

9:00 – 9:30

Teacher and Faculty Breakfast with the Author  
Jane Smith will escort.

9:45 - 10:45

Presentation #1 in Auditorium.  
Including questions and answer period.  
Audience: Grades 6 and 7  
Jane Smith will escort.

10:45 – 11:00

Author Break

11:00 – 12:00

Presentation #2  
Including question and answer period.  
Audience: Grade 8  
Jane Smith will escort.

12:00 – 1:00

Author's luncheon hosted by PTA.  
Teacher's Room

1:00 – 2:00

Small group writing workshop  
Audience: Selected students (passes given to students and lists to teachers)  
John Graham will escort.

2:00 – 2:15

Author Break

2:15 – 3:15

Book Signing for all grades  
Library  
Library staff and/or PTA representative will assist.

3:15 End of day – Author departs.



## ANNOUNCING THE AUTHOR VISIT TO STAFF

To: English and Reading Teachers  
From: Author Committee  
Re: Christopher Paul Curtis Visit, November 8<sup>th</sup>  
Date: September 11, 2001

Award winning author, **Christopher Paul Curtis** will be visiting Mont Pleasant Middle School on **Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup>**. Mr. Curtis is the author of Bud, Not Buddy, which won the 2000 Newbery Award, 2000 Coretta Scott King Award and the International Reading Association Award. It is the only book to have ever won all three of these awards. The book was also named a “Best Book” by the American Library Association, The New York Times and Publishers Weekly. His first book, The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963 was also the recipient of numerous awards and named a Newbery and Coretta Scott King Honor Book.

Both books are historical fiction. The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963, a warm family story, deals with the racial unrest of the early sixties and touches on the church bombing, still in the news, where four girls were killed. Bud, Not Buddy, deals with a boy, living during the Great Depression, trying to find the jazz musician father he has never met.

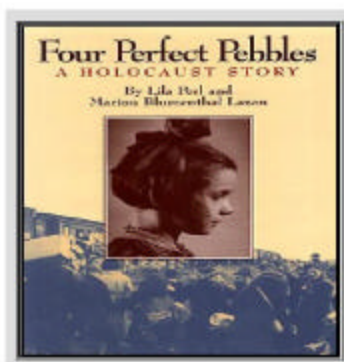
We are hoping that you will be able to prepare your students for Mr. Curtis’s visit by introducing one or both of these books to your students. **Class sets of both books have been ordered although not yet arrived. Audio-tapes of both books have been ordered for the library. We will let you know when these materials arrive. Both books will be on sale in the library soon and Mr. Curtis will be signing them the day of his visit. Many eighth graders have already read The Watsons go to Birmingham-1963. Mrs. Carpenter used this as a class book last year and students participated in a project dealing with the year 1963.**

**This web site provides several links for information about Mr. Curtis:**  
**<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/curtis.htm>.**

When students are prepared before author visits, they are much better behaved and the visit is more meaningful. We hope that you all will be able to spend some time with your students prior to Mr. Curtis’s visit working with these books.

Please contact Gail Denisoff, Molly Carpenter or Rachel Cameron for more information. We will let you know the status of ordered materials as soon as possible.

### SAMPLE BOOKPLATE FOR AUTHOR TO SIGN



**AUTHOR VISIT**

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

**Oneida Middle School, May 14, 2003**

Having the author to sign bookplates is a good idea. The plates can be affixed to books that are sold after the author visit.



# ORGANIZING/PLANNING MEMOS TO PARTICIPANTS

## Schenectady City School District

November 19 - 21, 2003

AUTHOR VISIT - BEN MIKAELSEN

### November 19<sup>th</sup> - Central Park Middle School

Contact person: Rita Moore, Library Media Specialist

School phone 518-370-8330 or 518-370-8250

Greg Rice will pick Ben Mikaelson up at the hotel on Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:15a.m. and return him to the hotel after the school day ends - 3:00ish

Greg's contact info: home phone - 518-356-9058

3166 Spawn Rd. Schenectady, NY

The schedule for the day is:

Period 1 into period 2	Grade 8 students
Period 3 into period 3	Grade 7 and 1 section grade 6
Period 5	Lunch
Period 6 into period 7	Grade 6
Period 8	Break
EA	Autograph session in Library.

### November 20<sup>th</sup> - Mont Pleasant Middle School

Contact Person - Gail Denisoff, Library Media Specialist

School Phone - 518-395-3507 or 518-370-8160

**Home Phone - 518-377-8149**

**Nettie Crossman will pick Ben up at the hotel approximately 7:00 - 7:15 (Home phone - 518-869-6343)**

8:30 - 9:30: 8th grade - *Research: Finding the heart of a story* (300)

10:00 - 11:00: 6th Grade - *Becoming the Author of Your Life* (300)

11:15 - 12:30: Luncheon

12:45 - 1:45: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade - *Becoming the Author of Your Life* (300)

2:00 - 2:40: Book Signing in Library

(Many of our 8<sup>th</sup> graders have seen Ben in the past which is why we would like this alternative topic - thanks!)

Gail Denisoff will bring Ben back to his hotel at the end of the day.

**November 21 - Oneida Middle School**

Contact Person: Nettie Crossman, Library Media Specialist

School phone: 518-370-8269

Nettie Crossman will pick him up from his hotel the mornings of his Mont Pleasant and Oneida appearances. Home Phone - 518-860-6343

Time - approximately 7:00 - 7:15 AM

**Oneida's Schedule - Nov. 21: (Times are approximate)**

8:18 - 11:10 - He will do 2 presentations [large groups (250 each) in auditorium] -

***Becoming the Author of your own life***

11:20 - 12:45 - Lunch & Book Signing - with faculty

1:19 -2:05 - He will do 1 additional presentation (small group of 50 in library) -

***Writing is Story Telling-a writing workshop***

2:05 - 2:40 -- Book Signing with students

Nettie Crossman will take him back to the airport on Friday, Nov. 21st.

**\*\*We are hoping that Ben can join a group of teachers from the various schools involved in the week's visit for dinner on Wednesday, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Please let us know if he will be able to do this.**



**SAMPLE PASSES**



Please excuse

\_\_\_\_\_

for the writing workshop  
with Alane Ferguson  
on Thursday April 28  
periods 7 and 8

G. Denisoff

**SPECIAL LIBRARY PASS**

Student's

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Librarian's**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of leaving Room: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: This student may report to the library for the author book signing.



## SAMPLE LUNCHEON INVITATION

Please join us for a luncheon with

**AUTHOR BEN MIKAELSEN**

**Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

**School Library**

Lunch will be catered by Center Stage Deli and consist of:

Assorted cold cuts, rolls and breads, pasta salad, potato salad, beverages and dessert.

Lunch will be available all three lunch periods, but Ben will only be in the library periods 5 and 6. (11:15 - 12:30)

**Cost is \$7.00 - please pay Ms. Smith no later than November 17<sup>th</sup>.**



Author Ben Mikaelson at Mont Pleasant Middle School



## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENT ACTIVITIES

There are many ways prepare your students for an author visit. The following are just a few of many activities that will make for a more positive experience for students, teachers and the author.

1. READ, READ, READ!!! The author will love you if every student has read at least one book or has had a book read to them. Classroom teachers, especially English or reading teachers have the best opportunity to use a book with their class(es). If the author is a non-fiction writer or writes in a specific genre such as historical fiction, teachers in other content areas may also become involved.
2. Use the book as a springboard to other activities. Perhaps students can keep a journal of their reading experiences, write a book commercial or a letter to the author.
3. Use the book as the basis for a research activity. Does the book take place in a specific area? Does it detail a specific event or take us to a different period in time? Do we find out about an animal, a sport, an important person, an unfamiliar culture or an alien world? Use the library to find out more about the topic(s) detailed in the book. Use the information found to create brochures, posters, poetry, reports, newspaper articles, etc. that can be displayed around the school
4. Ask the library-media specialist to book talk other books written by the visiting author.
5. Ask the neighborhood public library to highlight the authors' books. We have found that they are eager to connect with the schools and will even order more books by the visiting author to have available to students.
6. Display books, posters by students and other student work in the library.
7. Can you connect the book with local places of interest? Perhaps you can take your class on a field trip as a tie in. Example: Students who were doing an author study on Ben Mikaelson read Touching Spirit Bear. Two classes visited the Iroquois Indian Museum to see how practices of the Iroquois compared with those of the Tlingit Indians of Alaska who were featured in the book. This was followed by a video conference with the author.
8. Create a web quest using the author's web site. This allows students to explore all areas of the site.
9. Following the visit, students can write letters or draw pictures to send to the author.
10. Use your imagination and find other ways to incorporate the book into your curriculum!



Author Bruce Coville at Mont Pleasant Middle School



## SAMPLE WEBQUEST

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### BEN MIKAELSEN WEB QUEST

Log onto the computer. Go to Internet Explorer and type in the following web address: [www.benmikaelsen.com](http://www.benmikaelsen.com)

Explore the many areas of Ben Mikaelson's web site to find the answers to the following questions.

1. Where was Ben Mikaelson born? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where does he live now? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the title of Ben's most recent book (hint - it isn't available yet)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Choose one of Ben Mikaelson's books. Which book did you choose?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Where does this story take place? \_\_\_\_\_  
How did Ben research this book? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What unusual pet does Ben Mikaelson have? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What did Buffy do when Ben blew into his face? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How many times was Ben's first book Rescue Josh McGuire rejected before it was finally published? \_\_\_\_\_
8. When is Buffy's birthday? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What book is Ben's first sequel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. If you have time, explore one or more of the links provided on Ben Mikaelson's web page.



## SAMPLE NEWSLETTER

### CHARLES R. SMITH, JR. VISITS THE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY

Over a period of two days, SHS students who were selected by their English teachers met and heard from visiting poet, Charles R. Smith, Jr.

The library was transformed into a "mini theater" and nearly 300 students heard Smith recite his poetry and give incite into his past, his influences and successes as both a photographer and a writer. The library staff along with Fines Arts and Arts and Education sponsored this event as a kick-off for National Poetry Month celebrated in April.

Smith grew up in Compton, California and spent many hours reading anything he could get his hands on. Through reading he developed and polished his writing skills. He also fell into photography when he joined his high school yearbook staff. After high school, Charles attended the Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, California where he "learned how to 'make a picture instead of just taking one.'" He has published twenty titles and expects to have additional books available in 2007. Many of his poetry collections are available for checkout in the library. A biography written in verse about Muhammad Ali is due in 2007 along with the publishing of his first novel, Chameleon.

Each day was culminated with a writing workshop where students had an opportunity to work with the author and participate in a few exercises that stimulated their imaginations.



Author Charles R. Smith, Jr. at SHS



Charles R. Smith, Jr. at Schenectady HS

The librarians have received many positive comments and lots of feedback about this first-time event. The majority of the comments from teachers expressed this kind of sentiment: "Charles was great and all my kids loved the presentation. Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity. The student feedback has been positive. My students who went enjoyed it. I hope this can be a reality for next year!"

Smith lives in Poughkeepsie with his wife and three children.

Submitted By SHS Library Media Specialists: Nettie Crossman and Suzanne Bernadt



## SAMPLE NEWSLETTER

### TWO AUTHORS TO VISIT MONT PLEASANT

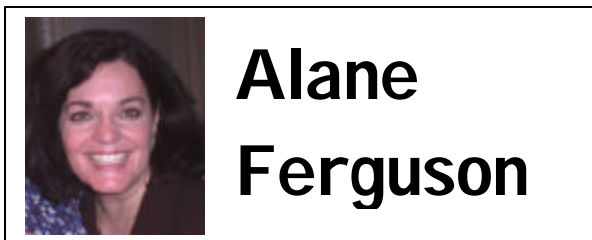
By G. Denisoff

We are fortunate to have renowned authors Alane Ferguson and Marion Blumenthal Lazan visiting Mont Pleasant this spring. Both authors have presented here in the past and were very well received by students and staff.

Alane Ferguson will be traveling from her home in Colorado to visit Mont Pleasant on Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Ferguson is the author of numerous mysteries, including Show Me the Evidence, which won her the coveted “Edgar” award from the Mystery Writers of America. Named for writer Edgar Allan Poe, this award is presented annually to authors of distinguished work in various categories of the genre. Alane Ferguson recently completed the last of twelve books in the “National Park Mysteries” series with her mother, writer Gloria Skurzynski. Published by the National Geographic Society, these mysteries each take place in a different National Park and also deal with an endangered animal. Currently, Mrs. Ferguson is working on a new series of forensic science mysteries. Humorous and outgoing, Mrs. Ferguson has been a favorite of Mont Pleasant students. You can learn more about Alane Ferguson at her website: [www.alaneferguson.com](http://www.alaneferguson.com)

Author and Holocaust survivor Marion Blumenthal Lazan will be returning to Mont Pleasant on Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Lazan is the author of the book Four Perfect Pebbles, an unforgettable memoir that recalls the devastating years that shaped her childhood. Following Hitler's rise to power, the Blumenthal family was trapped in Nazi Germany. For six and a half years the Blumenthals were forced to live in refugee, transit, and prison camps that included Westerbork in Holland and the notorious Bergen-Belsen in Germany. Their story is one of horror and hardship, but it is also a story of courage, hope, and the will to survive. Mrs. Lazan devotes her time to visiting as many schools and community organizations as possible to tell her story. As she notes, the children attending these presentations will be the last generation to hear first-hand from a survivor. It will then be their obligation to continue to tell the story of the Holocaust so it can never happen again. You can learn more about Marion Blumenthal Lazan at her website: [www.fourperfectpebbles.com](http://www.fourperfectpebbles.com)

Both presentations will be open to interested parents and community members.





## SAMPLE BOOKMARKS

I met author  
**Alane Ferguson**  
at MPMS  
April 25 & 28, 2005



"If there is a satisfaction beyond my own storytelling, it is in the opportunity to stoke the writing fire in others. The pure fun of creating characters and worlds is catching, and the rewards are permanent."

-Alane Ferguson

**Books by Alane Ferguson:**

- \*The National Parks Mysteries Series
- \*Show me the Evidence
- \*Overkill
- \*Poison
- \*Stardust
- etc.

For more information:  
[www.alaneferguson.com](http://www.alaneferguson.com)

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# BOCES ARTS IN EDUCATION FUNDING

Note: These directions are specific for Schenectady; other districts may benefit from understanding the process.

At the present time, SCSD can finance author visits through BOCES Arts in Education services. By working with current district coordinator for Arts in Education (in Schenectady that is Matt Weinheimer), each building can receive a reimbursement for any author/artist expense. This reimbursement is significant; it is highly recommended that SCSD librarians and teachers work with Arts in Ed to finance author visits.

## HOW BOCES FUNDING WORKS:

1. When you book your author, ask if s/he accepts payment through BOCES Arts in Education. Most do because many school districts can only pay this way. However, you may find that some authors prefer to be paid on the day of their visit, which eliminates using this BOCES method. It usually takes several weeks for BOCES to send out checks.
2. Go to the BOCES Arts in Education website (<http://arts.capregboces.org/Arts/forms.htm>). Print and fill out the Scheduling Form for your author visit. Send a copy directly to BOCES (address on the top of the form) and a copy to Arts In Ed coordinator. Be sure to keep a copy for yourself.
3. BOCES will send any necessary paperwork to the author to complete in order to receive their payment.
4. Be sure to check with your author prior to the visit to make sure s/he received this paperwork. If not, call the BOCES Arts in Education office to let them know.
5. The coordinator will ask you to give the author a check for the amount of the visit. (HINT: If possible, include the amount for expenses in addition to the honorarium so that you can receive reimbursement for both)
6. **IMMEDIATELY** after the author visit (the same day if possible but no later than the following day) call the BOCES Arts in Education office (464-3910) to inform them that the visit took place. Fill out the School Report Form (<http://arts.capregboces.org/Arts/forms.htm>). Send a copy to BOCES and one to coordinator. The author can't be paid until this form is submitted.
7. The following school year, the coordinator will inform you of the amount that has been refunded to you to use for another author.



Newbery winner Christopher Paul Curtis at Mont Pleasant MS  
SCSD – Denisoff and Crossman 25

ARTS IN EDUCATION  
DOCUMENTS



# ARTS IN EDUCATION SCHEDULING FORM 2005-2006

MUST BE SUBMITTED 3 WEEKS PRIOR TO DATE - SEND ALL MAY & JUNE FORMS BY MAY 12TH

**ALL SECTIONS MUST BE COMPLETED – TO CONFIRM BOCES RECEIPT OF THIS FORM, CALL 464-3910**

**A. SCHOOL:**  
 DISTRICT \_\_\_\_\_  
 BUILDING \_\_\_\_\_  
 CONTACT PERSON \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

**B. ARTIST:** ARTIST ID # \_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**C.**  PERFORMANCE ONLY  WORKSHOP(S)  RESIDENCY \_\_\_\_\_ # OF DAYS  
**YOU MUST CALL ON THE DATE INDICATED BELOW TO CONFIRM THIS PROGRAM TOOK PLACE**  
 DATE(S) \_\_\_\_\_  
 PROGRAM TITLE(S) \_\_\_\_\_  
 # OF STUDENTS \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE LEVEL(S) \_\_\_\_\_  
 AMOUNT DUE ARTIST \_\_\_\_\_

**D. NYS LEARNING STANDARDS FOR THE ARTS ADDRESSED BY THIS PROGRAM:** (check all that apply)

\_\_\_ STANDARD 1: **CREATING, PERFORMING, AND PARTICIPATING IN THE ARTS**  
 Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performances in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts.

\_\_\_ STANDARD 2: **KNOWING AND USING ARTS MATERIALS AND RESOURCES**  
 Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.

\_\_\_ STANDARD 3: **RESPONDING TO AND ANALYZING WORKS OF ART**  
 Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

\_\_\_ STANDARD 4: **UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ARTS**  
 Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

**E.** How will this program address Arts Standard(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Check all other Learning Standards this program will address:**

**CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL STUDIES STANDARDS:**

- Planning a Career
- Applying Academic Learning in the Workplace & Other Settings
- Pursuing Career Options

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS:**

- Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking for Information & Understanding
- Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking for Literacy Response & Expression
- Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking for Critical Analysis & Evaluation
- Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking for Social Interaction

**HEALTH/PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HOME ECONOMICS STANDARDS:**

- Maintaining Personal Health & Fitness
- Maintaining a Safe & Healthy Environment
- Managing Personal & Community Resources

**LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH STANDARDS:**

- Using a Language other than English for Communication
- Developing Cross-Cultural Understanding

**MATH/SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS:**

- Using Mathematical Analysis, Scientific Inquiry & Engineering Design
- Managing Information Systems
- Understanding and applying Mathematical Concepts & Principals
- Understanding and applying Scientific Concepts & Principals
- Understanding and applying Technological Concepts & Principals
- Understanding and applying Common Themes across Mathematics, Science & Technology
- Interdisciplinary Problem-Solving

**SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS:**

- Understanding the History of the United States and New York
- Understanding World History
- Understanding the Geography of the World
- Understanding Economics
- Understanding Civics, Citizenship & Government

**F. AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_**

RETURN TO: Barbara R. Spring, Program Manager, Arts & Enrichment Service,  
Suite 102, 900 Watervliet-Shaker Road, Albany, NY 12205  
(518) 464-3910 Fax: (518) 464-3909



# ARTS IN EDUCATION 2005-2006 SCHOOL REPORT

**SCHOOL MUST RETURN TO ADDRESS BELOW IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING ARTIST VISIT**

Barbara R. Spring, Arts & Enrichment Service  
Suite 102, 900 Watervliet-Shaker Road, Albany, NY 12205

Artist/Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Form Completed By (circle one): Administrator    Teacher    Student    Parent    Other \_\_\_\_\_

For Number of Students \_\_\_\_\_ in Grade Level(s) \_\_\_\_\_

PERFORMANCE     WORKSHOP     RESIDENCY     CONSULTING SERVICES

Describe the curricular objective(s) and how this program addressed it (them):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### EDUCATIONAL QUALITY OF THE PROGRAM

Please circle Yes or No

Was the program grade level appropriate? .....	Yes	No
Did the teacher(s) and artist do preplanning? .....	Yes	No
Were the students engaged, interested, and attentive? .....	Yes	No
Would you recommend this program? .....	Yes	No

### ARTISTIC QUALITY

Did the artist demonstrate skill in the art form? .....	Yes	No
Did the artist interact well with students? .....	Yes	No
Did the artist encourage the students to participate? .....	Yes	No
Were effective materials provided prior to or following the experience? .....	Yes	No

### WORKSHOPS AND RESIDENCIES ONLY

Did the artist provide for hands-on experience? .....	Yes	No
Did the artist effectively communicate with teachers and staff? .....	Yes	No

## Credits

“Arts in Education Scheduling Form” (PDF). May 2005

<<http://arts.capregboces.org/Arts/forms.htm>>.

“Arts in Education School Report Form” (PDF). May 2005.

<<http://arts.capregboces.org/Arts/forms.htm>>.

“The Perfect Author Visit,” Dan Gutman. 2006 <<http://www.dangutman.com/>>.