

Marrama Messenger

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MARRAMA
ELEMENTARY

SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:

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GT Students Invited to Museum

Over the last few years Marrama has cultivated a working relationship with the Denver Museum of Nature and Science to supplement our science curriculum with programs designed to reinforce and extend what students learn in their classrooms. Because of this relationship the Marrama Gifted and Talented students in 4th and 5th grades were invited to the museum for a special celebration Wednesday May 8th. As part of the 2012 Eat Well @ School Cooking Competition celebration, our students got to visit the Expedition Health interactive exhibit, enjoy the winning lunch in the competition, and experience the Mammoths and Mastodons Exhibition. The students went on a special behind-the-scenes tour of the Genetics of Taste Lab with the museum Health Sciences Curator, Nicole Garneau and learned about how the tongue detects the different tastes and the study she is conducting with adults to map taste buds on the tongue. It was an amazing opportunity for our students to see behind the scenes of an actual working science laboratory.



Marrama Student Makes DPS History

This year Marleene Ibarra, 4th grade student at Marrama made history as a Denver Public School student. She won the first ever DPS Board of Education Outstanding Achievement Award for an elementary student. She was given the award at the March 21st meeting of the school board. Marleene's family, Mrs. Fraguada, principal, and Mrs. Gilmore, GT teacher, were in attendance to see her receive the award.

Marleene is a 4th grade student who has been at Marrama since ECE. She is a first year member of the Marrama Choir and the Marrama Band. The band and choir director, David Heck stated, "Marleene is always prepared to perform. She is enthusiastic and inspires other musicians around her. It is obvious she takes music seriously, practices religiously, and always does her very best." Ms. Halt, Marleene's homeroom teacher described her as, "A model student both academically and personally. Her behavior in the classroom and throughout the school is above reproach. She is a member of student council and displays her qualities of leadership in everything she does."

Mrs. Gilmore, science and gifted/talented teacher ranks Marleene as the top academic student at Marrama. "She consistently out performs all students around her but she does so with grace and humility. Marleene shares her knowledge with others and willingly helps other students with questions or alternative explanations. She challenges teachers and students around her to strive to be better and learn more. This year Marleene won top honors at the Marrama Science Fair for 4th grade. She took her project to the DPS district science fair in January and competed very well."

Mrs. Fraguada had this to say. "We are so proud of Marleene's accomplishments. There will be many more firsts in her academic future."



Shakespeare Would Have Been Proud

Had Shakespeare been at the Performing Arts Center downtown March 26, 2013, he would have been proud of the performances Marrama students delivered. Twelve fifth graders performed five different scenes from Romeo and Juliet. At least one actor from each of the five scenes received a ribbon for their performances.

The day began with opening ceremonies downtown followed by a parade down the 16th street mall before students split up and performed on their assigned stages. There were musical groups, dancers, food, and thousands of kids from K-8th grade reciting original Shakespearean verse. Students were required to dress in period clothing as well.

Our students acted out the most famous scenes including Romeo and Juliet in the garden, Juliet receiving the potion from the friar, and a sword fight in the streets of Verona. Because the festival took place during the work day the thespians

also performed during Marra-ma's talent night for family and friends. "The festival was wonderful. The kid's hard work really paid off. I was very proud of each student, commented Mrs. Gilmore."



Mile High Scholars Shine

The stars were out the evening of May 14, 2013 but they weren't the ones in the sky. The stars were the students chosen as the Mile High Scholars in the Far Northeast Region of the Denver Public School District. Proud parents and family, teachers, and district administrators gathered at the Evie Dennis Campus to honor the accomplishments and celebrate their dedication and ongoing commitment of these students to academic excellence.



One student is chosen from each grade. Marrama chose Luke Watts 1st, Blessing Madueke 2nd, Serenity Gilmore 3rd, Emily Salazar 4th, and Samuel Rodriguez 5th to represent our school. The first grade team chose Luke because he is polite, respectful, involved, determined, and excellent. He scored 100% on the Math Interim and End-of-Year Math and Science Assessments. He also had perfect attendance! Blessing was chosen because she excels in the classroom, is always willing to help and is a leader in her class. Third grade honored Serenity because she works hard, always has a great attitude about school and her work. Socially she is kind and respectful and helpful to other students and friends. She has also made the most academic growth. Emily was the 4th grade choice because she embodies the essence of an exemplary student. Her character and learning attitude defines Marrama PRIDE. The 5th grade teachers selected Samuel because he has an outstanding work ethic, is advanced academically, and his behavior and attitude is beyond reproach. These five

students represent everything an exemplary student should be. They serve as role models in our school and exude Marrama Pride every day. Congratulations from the Marrama family.

World Famous Authors Speak at Marrama

April 24, 2013 began as a regular school day but quickly changed into a rather amazing day. It began when 3rd-5th grade students entered the auditorium to listen to the world famous author and Denver resident, Avi. The students had read his books and created many different projects demonstrating their appreciation of his craft. Mrs. Saunders 3rd graders enjoyed *Who Stole the Wizard of Oz* while Mrs. Regan's class enjoyed *The Secret School*, a story about one-room schools in Colorado. Ms. Halt's 4th graders read *The Good Dog* as an introduction into a research project on dog breeds and Mrs. Watts' 5th grade classes enjoyed *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*.

Avi told the kids about his life and how he became a writer. First of all, Avi is not his given name. His twin sister gave him his pen name while his parents named him Edward Wortis. He grew up in New York City and wasn't a good student. He especially wasn't good at writing. When one of his high school teachers told him he couldn't write, Avi decided to become a writer to prove her wrong.

Avi has published 73 books, has 15 books that haven't been published, and is currently working on three more. He wrote *S.O.R. Losers*, a story about his experiences playing soccer in high school, in just one day but it took him 14 years to finish *Bright Shadow*. His first book was published in 1970 for his first son Sean. *The Good Dog* is about his son Jack and his dog McKinley. Inspiration is all around us. Most of his offerings take about a year to finish and normally go through 70-80 rewrites before submission to his publisher. Avi works 8-10 hours each day.

The kids also learned about how the publishing business works. There are about fifty people that work on a book during the publishing process. Everyone must be paid when that book gets published so Avi only sees \$1 from hardback books and 25 cents from his paperback books. He never knows how much he is going to earn because you can't predict how the book will sell. Avi admitted he has always liked to read. As a young boy that was the only form of entertainment so his dad walked to the library with him every weekend to read. He is still inspired by his love to read. The secret to writing is this: "Good writers don't write writing...they write reading. I feel sad when I finish a book because the characters are my friends and I'm not going to be working with them anymore. My favorite book is the one I'm working on." Avi is 75 years old.

The K-2nd students couldn't be left out of the festivities. They also shared a book with their teacher and created kindness quilts, letters and bookmarks and even painted tigers and sequenced story events. Kathleen Pelley, author of five picture books including *The Giant King*, *Raj the Book Store Tiger*, and *Magnus Maximus a Marvelous Measurer*, took our young students on a story journey. Mrs. Pelley is a native of Scotland that now lives in Denver. She shared Scotland's culture with the kids, describing bagpipes, kilts, castles, loches, traveling on ferries when going to school, and several Scottish words. She missed her native land so much that she began writing stories about it.

All of her stories include her favorite things in life; people, places, pets, poems, pictures, and passion. Her stories, like Avi, have ties to her family. *The Sandal Artist*, about her artist brother, tells us you will miss the world if you're not out in it and *Magnus Maximus* is about her husband and tells us the best things in life cannot be measured. The main character even looks like him. She doesn't have a favorite book; just favorite parts in all of her books. "Good books should have layers of meaning. That's the



magic of a good book. When I publish a book, the book is no longer mine...it's yours. When you read a story you should take a souvenir with you from the story. Stories can make you walk in someone else's shoes." That's part of the story journey.

Mrs. Pelley is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, taught school, and was a narrator for the Colorado Talking Book Library for the blind. She left our students with some writing advice. "The act of writing, no matter how small, is never wasted. Read, read, read, read."



Marrama's Talented Students Perform on Stage

Students gathered in the cafeteria to hear a reassuring word from their friends and other performers on May 1st because the annual "Marrama's Got Talent Show" was about to begin. Students had to audition before the judging panel consisting of Mr. Heck, Mrs. McKenna-Collum, and Mr. Stowe to be part of the show. There were many talented groups and individuals that auditioned with 23 acts making the cut.

The auditorium was packed with friends, family, and staff to witness many hidden talents of our kids. The 5th grade GT students performed their skits from the DPS Shakespeare Festival. Their award-winning acts from Romeo and Juliet got the crowd warmed up for a wide variety of acts. They included magic tricks, a jump rope routine, four piano solos, numerous vocal solos, various dance groups and individuals, as well as a performance by the Marrama members of the Colorado Starlites drill team.

The performances varied from popular pop songs, rap numbers, the Harlem shake, classical, the '80's, and performances written and choreographed by the students themselves. It takes courage and perseverance to perform before a packed house. Our students proved they were up to the challenge.



Puppets & Things on Strings

Sharing experiences together as a family is the focus of family nights at Marrama. Literacy night, held on April 4th was no exception. Community Resources provided the pizza and lemonade for the family dinner. There was plenty of pizza to go around and many families were even able to take pizza home. The entertainment featured Mark Hellerstein and his Puppets & Things on Strings show.

Mr. Hellerstein is a ventriloquist. He began studying ventriloquism 40 years ago as a 10-year old boy. It takes many, many years of practice to perfect the art of speaking without moving your lips and throwing your voice to an animated puppet. To perfect his craft, Mark studied with a mentor in Las Vegas to create his shows. Mark performs several different shows depending upon the age of his audience. Last year he did 170 performances. He will also be featured in a short film later this year.

His Puppets & Things on Strings is designed for younger audiences. It tells a story about an adventure in reading. The show featured Pansy the chimpanzee, Willie Worm the Bookworm in a story about Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and Frankenstein. Mr. Hellerstein's puppets are very intricate. One of his puppets is handcrafted out of wood and took six years for a master puppeteer to create. It was a great show and showed the students an art form they had never seen before. The kids really enjoyed it.



Marrama Elementary School

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