

Reading/Workshop/Conference Experience

Readings for Children:

Approximately 50 visiting-author school programs a year since 2001 (I have visited schools in Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Niagara, Kitchener, Labrador, PEI, Sarnia, Brampton, eastern Ontario, northeastern Ontario, Kenora, Winnipeg, Regina, Ohio, Texas, Pennsylvania, Bahrain, Qatar.)

Reading Umbrella Gala, Ottawa, November 2003

National Children's Book Week, November 2001 (PEI author tour)

National Children's Book Week, (10-day Labrador tour), November 1997

Conferences:

The Fun of Reading Conference, National Library of Canada, Ottawa, June 2003

Qatar Reading Association, Doha, February 2002

Reading Umbrella Literacy Conference, Niagara Falls, ON, November 2001,

Keystone State Reading Association, Hershey, PA, October 2001

Mississauga International Children's Book Festival, Mississauga, featured author, June 2001

Winnipeg Children's Roundtable AGM, Winnipeg, guest speaker, April 2001,

The Arab Reading Association Persian Gulf Conference, Bahrain, keynote speaker, February 2000

Book Expo, Canadian Booksellers Assn., Toronto, author spotlight, June 2000

International Reading Assn. (Eastern Region), Dover, DE, October 1999

Florida State Reading Conference, Jacksonville, FL, October 1998

Reading for the Love of It Conference, Toronto, February 1997

International Reading Association, (Western Region), Seattle, March 1996

Teaching:

Writing for Children Workshop, Ottawa, fundraiser for CCBC, fall 2005

Writing for Children, St. Lawrence College, Kingston, ON – credit course. 1995

Awards:

Nominated for Frogger, 2002 Silver Birch Award

Description of Workshops and Readings for Children

The general theme of my school talks is the process of turning an idea into a story. Regardless of the age group, I discuss the basic elements of a story and use some of my own picture books as examples so that students can see the step-by-step publishing process. While I keep the tone fun as I explore the sources of my ideas, the messages about reading and writing are clear.

1. a writer's most valuable tool is his or her imagination
2. everyone has a story to tell, no matter where they live.

Usually my presentations last 45 to 60 minutes to accommodate school schedules. Longer sessions with more time for discussion and questions can easily be arranged for older students. A typical half-day visit consists of two one-hour presentations for students from grade one to six (although I often go up to grade eight), preferably grouped by grade levels. I can also pay a recess-length visit to kindergarteners in their own classroom between my main talks. When I talk to older students, teachers often ask me to discuss writing and the related arts as a career choice which often leads into my background as a magazine journalist, editor and, recently, TV scriptwriter. Whatever your needs, I am extremely flexible in planning talks and am happy to work with teachers beforehand to target specific interests. My overriding concern is that students enjoy the presentations and realize that reading and writing can be fun.

I bring my presentations alive with a colourful slide show that keeps my audience focussed no matter what size the group. I can adapt my sessions to all grade levels from primary to junior and intermediate – and have also done high school, college and university sessions. I use my own picture books as examples of how stories are built on ideas – revealing the importance of colourful characters with interesting problems that need creative solutions. I talk about the need for multiple drafts and the careful checking of work. Then I show how I work with illustrator John Bianchi to blend art and words together and carefully plan the final layout.

Three letters of reference follow:

March 1, 2008

Shannon Howe,
Canadian Children's Book Centre,
Toronto

Dear Ms. Howe,

Frank Edwards is an insightful, entertaining and humorous speaker and author.

Frank was invited as a guest author to our school's Family Literacy Celebration last year. During the day he presented a workshop to both our primary and junior students about his background as an author, his writing process, and anecdotes from his youth that found their way into his writing.

Later that evening, he shared his stories with parents and students who were thrilled to meet their favourite author in person. Frank created a memorable evening with a slide show and more story-telling. My students were delighted to have Frank autograph their copies of Frogger, Frank's hilarious tale of hi-jinks in a small Ontario village.

Frank's presentation was both professional and entertaining. His visit made a strong impression on my students, who are children in a "turn around" school that is focusing on bringing the joy of reading to disadvantaged students.

I highly recommend him to you.

Sincerely,

Maya Jagger
Elementary Teacher,
Deseronto P.S.
Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board
613-378-0174
mjagger@hpedsb.on.ca

March 1, 2008

Dear Shannon Howe

I would like to take the opportunity to share with you a few of my thoughts about Frank B. Edwards and his visits to my school. Frank has visited Guardian Angels Catholic elementary school on 3 occasions over the last 6 years. His presentations to our Grade One and Grade Two classes are always a huge hit!!! Not only does he inspire our students to become authors, he also creates a spark in them that can be seen when they pick up one of his many wonderful books.

Frank brings his books to life while he explains to his audiences the process behind the book. There are always many 'ooohs' and 'aahhs' when he shows how each book is assembled. It's a presentation that the students don't forget. He always makes time for numerous questions at the end of his presentations and learning that takes place is inspiring! Year after year I have students remind me that they met Frank and he signed one of their books. Having the opportunity to meet a Canadian author is something that all children should have.

Frank has also taken the time to meet with my University of Ottawa students in the Faculty of Education. These students are in the New Teacher Candidate Program and Frank has presented a workshop for them on 'How to Host an Author' in your school. These students benefited from Frank's years of experience visiting schools and they now know how to successfully host an author visit.

Frank's dedication to literacy and children is without a doubt a special quality. I hope you will consider him for your Annual Author Visit Program. I have no doubt that the students and teachers he meet will have a new appreciation for books once they meet.

Please don't hesitate to call me if you would like any further information regarding Frank B. Edwards and his author visits to my school and university.

Victoria White

Guardian Angels Catholic Elementary School

Ottawa, Ontario (613) 836-7423
Victoria.white@ottawacatholicschools.ca

March 1, 2008

Shannon Howe
Canadian Children's Book Centre
Toronto, ON

Dear Shannon:

Northeastern Catholic District School Board has been privileged to have Frank B. Edwards visit each and every one of the schools in our jurisdiction. In each and every instance, Frank managed to capture the interest and imagination of the children with whom he worked, and his presentation was tailored to a variety of grade levels. Frank was both compelling and interactive, and the students not only enjoyed the session, but learned much about the world of writing. Our school principals collectively admitted that he was the best author to have ever visited their schools, and they asked that he be allowed to return in the future.

Frank was first introduced to us as our guest speaker at our Annual Children's Writing Conference where up to 50 children from each of our schools come to Timmins in celebration of their own work. At the conference, we always invite an author to be our keynote and to work two workshops during the day. When Frank came to us, he also offered to work with children in our schools in Timmins, and we took him up on his offer. We were so very pleased with his work that we asked him to come up and visit each of our schools in 8 different communities the following year.

Children are drawn to Frank's gifted approach. He seems to know how to tap into their imagination by helping them draw from their own experiences in an effort to understand how stories develop. In this, Frank is at his very best. It is a bonus that Frank stays current with education's thrust in the literacy arena, and he is quick to utilize the approaches that are used in classrooms in the Balanced Literacy classroom in his work with children. We sincerely appreciate this about Frank.

I am pleased to hear that he may be included in your author's visit program. Know that you will be more than satisfied in the effort that Frank puts forth and in the results that he garners in terms of celebrating and enlivening the author in all of our children. I highly recommend him to your program.

Should you wish to contact me at any time, please see all of my contact information below. As well, should you wish a hard copy of this with an original signature, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Until then, I remain,

Sincerely,

Paul

P. Toffanello
Director of Education

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