

NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship Reports for 2007/2008

Susan Knorr Spotlight on Books 2008 April 11 & 12, 2008

On a wintry April weekend I attended NLLN's Spotlight On Books at Ruttger's Sugar Lake Lodge. This was the first time I had attended the conference and what a "spotlight" it was! Being not a librarian, but an elementary teacher, I was thrilled to be allowed to attend.

Jim Trelease: The read-aloud guru pulled me in immediately and his timeless message about the importance of reading to children early, often, and continuously throughout their lives was inspirational again. Since returning, I have begun working on video presentations of the teachers in my school with their favorite books and summer reading plans for the newscasts and TV monitors, planned a program to send chapter books into all my students' homes to be read aloud and reviewed for the class, added magazines, newspaper comic sections, and comic books to the classroom, and changed the name of Silent Sustained Reading to RFF (Reading For Fun).

Mary Casanova: Successful authors from one's own backyard make writing seem so much more attainable. Mary's warmth, enthusiasm, and familiar settings prompted me to talk to colleagues about the possibility of having her do an author visit to our district in the near future.

Debra Frasier/D.J. McHale: The wonder of what goes into illustrating a book and the real-life stories of D.J. about his dislike for writing both have been passed on to my students and hopefully inspired them to not be afraid of thinking of themselves as writers and book-creators. I now view writing as more ideas than the physical writing process and have allowed my students more creativity in their assignments.

This conference provided me with new energy to continue what I love to do - provide young children with many, many opportunities to hear stories, and share new books and ideas with colleagues. Time to sit with new friends (including the gregarious Jim Trelease) and share the love of reading, literature, and even politics was invaluable. I deeply appreciate the work that NLLN put into making such a memorable conference without mosquitoes and for the financial support.

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