

NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship Reports for 2007/2008

Amy Soma
Spotlight on Books 2008
April 11 & 12, 2008

Thanks to generous support from NLLN's continuing education scholarship program, I was able to attend the 20th annual *Spotlight on Books* conference in Grand Rapids, MN. Not even a nasty spring snowstorm could ruin this fun-filled and informative event.

Friday, renowned reading expert Jim Trelease regaled the audience with humorous anecdotes and startling facts that demonstrate the importance of reading aloud to children through a presentation titled *Making Books into Friends, Not Enemies*. Mr. Trelease maintains that reading to children aids in language acquisition and reading skills. He concluded his presentation by doing book talks for several new books that he has recently read and recommends for young readers. After dinner Mr. Trelease spoke regarding *What Teachers and Librarians can Learn from Oprah, Barnes and Noble, and the Grocery Store*. This was a once in a lifetime experience and I am thankful for the opportunity to listen to a person who believes strongly that reading is the basis for all knowledge acquisition and the foundation for reading is laid by reading aloud to children of all ages.

Saturday attendees had the privilege of listening to three featured authors as well as attending showcases that highlighted *What to Read After Harry*, *Hot Read-Alouds of 2007*, *The Magic of Science*, and a lively game called *Pin the Tail on the Author*. The featured authors, Mary Casanova, Debra Frasier, and DJ MacHale spoke about their books, the writing process, and the importance of readings. Each presentation was unique and interesting, providing the audience with great ideas to take back to their schools and libraries. I know Debra Frasier's emphasis on creating lesson plans and craft ideas to accompany her books was especially appreciated by many in attendance.

As I continue to do volunteer work with agencies that promote reading to children, this experience will stay with me and influence my thoughts and actions.

Amy Soma
Concordia College
Moorhead, MN