

Introduction

Words Out is a School Council sponsored literacy initiative that exposes students to authors and introduces parents to teachers' literacy tools. Thanks to *Words Out*, students are excited about writing and parents are able to help their children develop their literacy skills.

The *Words Out* committee is made up of School Council members and teachers.

Funding

Funding has been required to pay for author presentations, books for the library and craft materials.

Author presentations: School Council

Family Writing Night: 2010/11 Parent Involvement Grant

'One Book, One School': 2011/12 Parent Reaching Out Grant.

***Words Out* and The School Success Plan**

Words Out helps meet School Success Plan priorities in the following ways:

- Increasing students' engagement in writing, with a focus on the reading / writing connection
Students listen to authors discuss the writing process and read from their books. This builds on the work done in the classrooms including drafting, revising, illustrating, publishing written work, etc.
- Increasing literacy levels for boys
A number of authors have been chosen who write on topics and in a style that gives boys a reason and desire to read. Male authors model writing for boys.
- Supporting the school's character development program
The *Words Out* committee chooses authors that focus on bullying, social justice, peace, kindness, environmental awareness, etc. (e.g. Janet Wilson, author of *Our Earth: How Kids are Saving the Planet*)

Events

2010/11

October: Family Writing Night

Anna Trinca, early literacy teacher, led family members in a writing assignment. The resulting stories were posted in the hallway. Sign up for the Family Writing Night was so overwhelming, it was held for a second evening.

January: Presentation to Parents

An evening with CBC personality, Kevin Sylvester.

Mr. Sylvester has written a number of books for children, including: *Sports Hall of Weird* which was nominated for a Silver Birch Award by the Ontario Library Association.

Authors who presented to students:

- Nan Forler - *Bird Child*
- Sigmund Brouwer
- Deborah Ellis
- Tamara Awad Lobe, (a teacher at Elizabeth Ziegler who is a published author)
- Mary Eileen McClear - presentation entitled *The Art of Story Telling* (How to find, learn and tell stories)
- Jan Hansen
- Helaine Becker

2011/12

November: Family Writing night

Scott Chanter gave a presentation on the craft of writing graphic novels. There were lots of questions from parents and children.

January/February: One Book, One School event *The BFG* by Roald Dahl

Parents and their children read *The BFG* together over January and February. Activities, such as crafts, writing, visiting musician, etc., were held once a week for children at school during nutrition breaks. Many parent volunteers helped with the events. Some teachers featured the book during literacy.

Authors who presented to students:

- Harry Endrulat, *A Bear in War*,
- Hugh Brewster, *Dieppe*
- Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang *A Flock of Shoes*
- Janet Wilson
- Michael Wade *And then it happened* series

Summer 2012

- Students were asked to write a postcard describing something their family did over the summer and send it to the school. The postcards were displayed in the library in the fall.
- Parents were invited to help their children ‘make a little change for the planet’ over the summer and write about their experiences. This idea was taken from Janet Wilson’s books.

2012/13

February-April Magazine Publication

Children from JK to gr. 6 have been invited to contribute to an EZ magazine.

34 junior students will be involved in editing and production and 64 JK to gr. 6 students have signed up to contribute. Stories, articles, interviews, puzzles, comics, jokes, drawings and photographs will be included in the magazine to be published in April 2013.

A parent who edits the *New Quarterly*, will assist the magazine staff. The preparation of the magazine allows students to apply the writing and reading skills they have learned in class. Students from Elizabeth Ziegler have been invited to submit ideas for consideration. Junior students have had the opportunity to sign up to take a variety of roles of the magazine staff. These roles include editorial team, picture editors, copy editors, French copy editors, typists and production. Our magazine will be published this spring.

Scott Chantler, a graphic novelist presented to all students. His talk focused on how images can give more detail to your story or information than just simple words.

Authors who presented to students:

- Scott Chantler: Graphic Novelist
- Mireille Messier: French Children’s Author – a grant from the WRDSB French Department paid a portion of cost