



Celebrating Writers with Ruth Ayres

Details and Registration Information enclosed.

Page 4



Read an Interview with author Todd Parr on Page 3 & 4

Mission Statement

The members of The Literacy Connection strive to build a community of scholar-teachers who support, share, publish, and disseminate professional information and engage cooperatively in workshops, curriculum development, evaluation and research activities. We also seek to foster educationally sound practices among teachers, parents, policy makers, and others who are involved and interested in literacy matters.

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Dear Literacy Connection friends,

Welcome and Happy 2013-2014 Academic Year!

A new school year always brings new possibilities. Regardless of the years we've been teaching, there's an invisible yet concrete satisfaction to know that a new year is a brand new start. Summer is gone now but before its departure it left us with a renewed spirit, body and soul, and a season filled with memories. For many of us, it also left us with a box of possibilities: new books, new standards, new blogs to read and grow throughout the year.

For us at The Literacy Connection the 2013-2014 academic year also means a new program with paths of learning and discovery. We're certain that Ruth Ayres coming to Columbus will re-energize our love for writing while also consider new challenges and perspectives. Don't miss this opportunity to learn with us this year. You'll find more details about her presentations on page 5 in this newsletter.

In this newsletter edition I've included an interview with children's book author, Todd Parr. His books are always very inspirational and every child (especially the ones in early grades) should be holding one of his books throughout the year. Read on to find out what his new upcoming book will be all about!

We also want to express our gratitude to our former Newsletter Editor June White for her dedication, time and love for learning and sharing. We appreciate all the time she put into putting the past newsletters together so everyone can have access to the information. Thank you June!

Remember that this year is your own journey. You pack, you bring, you take, you leave behind as much as it's necessary. Only you know when the timing is right. If you have suggestions, comments, requests, please don't hesitate to contact me at stellavillalba@yahoo.com. Looking forward to another year of growth.

Stella Villalba

Newsletter Editor



Interview with Todd Parr, author of children's books.

By Stella Villalba

Todd Parr & The Literacy Connection: a sweet conversation

Todd Parr allowed me to interview him for The Literacy Connection. When I told him that teachers from Ohio and neighboring states would be reading this interview, he got excited. You can count on Todd Parr always saying, "I love teachers!" and when you read this, you'll understand why. This interview is organized in three sections for easier navigation. First, the first section is all about his books, inspiration and an upcoming book. The last two sections of this interview are about his writing and reading life. You'll find Todd Parr's humbleness very inspiring!

About Todd Parr's Books

Your books are so beloved because they convey powerful messages through colorful illustrations. Please let us get in Todd Parr's mind for a minute. What are some of things you're thinking as you create these books?

Some of what I write about comes from my own struggles when I was younger. The rest is everything I learned since I started writing children's books. I feel this need to help kids feel good about themselves while learning about differences.

Children are curious by nature. When you visit schools, do they often ask you challenging life questions? What's your approach when having these kinds of conversations with young children?

Yes, and then I read Underwear Do's and Don't.

Where do you turn for inspiration to write books with such significant topics yet accessible to children?

I rely on my simple art style and humor to help discuss complex topics.

What's your workspace like?

Like Pee Wee's playhouse or a giant playroom.

What are you working on right now? Any new books we can look forward to?

I just finished a new book for Spring 2014 entitled It's OK to Make Mistakes.

About his Writing Life

Let's talk about your writing life. What's the best part of it? What's the most challenging part?

The best part would be writing and drawing all day. I love when Pete and Tater Tot come to my office every hour to remind me it's time for a treat, or time for dinner or a walk. The most challenging part is when I want to work on a new book or project but I'm not feeling creative.

What encouragement helped you along the way in your work as a children's author?

Someone helping me overcome my hurdle of thinking that I was not qualified to be a writer because I did so poorly in school and was a slow reader.

What is a typical day in the life of Todd Parr as a writer?

When I wake up, I like to be on the computer while I'm still in bed. Then I like to take Pete and Tater for a long walk. When I come back, I have a chance to answer emails and work on updates for my social media sites. Then I either work on a book in progress or try to come up with something new. My break is taking Pete and Tater for another walk. After lunch, I'd continue working until it's dinnertime for Pete and Tater. They love their treats. Some days the three of us take a nap together.

Are there any specific beneficial habits as a writer that you could share with aspiring writers?

Find the perfect space that inspires you. Surround yourself with things that inspire you and make you happy.

About his Reading Life

Tell us what you're reading right now.

I'm reading a cookbook right now. I also enjoy food magazines. I just finished Dinner: A Love Story.

If Todd Parr organizes a Book Club with children, what books would they be reading?

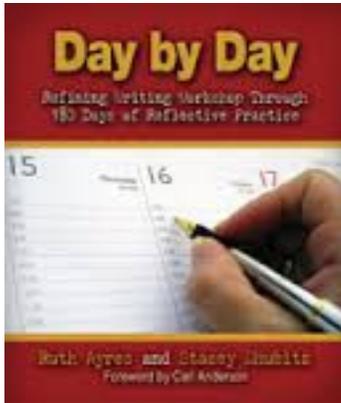
Underwear Do's and Don'ts, Go Dog Go, Green Eggs and Ham and last but not least, we will read Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus.

If you could go back in time and meet some children's book authors from your childhood, who would it be? What would you tell or ask them?

I'd loved to meet Dr. Seuss. I would ask him where did he get all these crazy ideas. I'd also love to know how he got started writing books.

What would you like to say to teachers who are reading this interview?

Thanks for not giving up on kids like me. Thanks for your tireless effort to help make a difference in children's lives.



+ Celebrating Writers

The Literacy Connection has prepared yet again another amazing program for this year. We're proud to host Ruth Ayres whose sessions will focus on writing and celebrating writers. This year we're bringing our Keynote Speaker twice to Columbus. Ruth Ayres' first session will be this year on Saturday September 28 from 8:30am to 2:30pm at Indian Run Elementary (Dublin City Schools). The second session will be next year on Saturday April 5. It will be the same hours and location both sessions.

Ruth helps students celebrate each stage of the writing process. She helps students persevere through the challenging parts. In these sessions, Ruth will address some of the following points;

1. Consider ways to respond, reflect and rejoice throughout the writing process.
2. Weave celebrations into mini-lessons, conferring and daily share sessions.
3. Think about using social media networks to help students interact and collaborate with a global audience.
4. Meet the demands of the new Common Core State Standards and the students' needs through celebration that includes reflection and response.

[More on 6](#)

Please visit our website www.theliteracyconnection.org for more information. You can register in two different ways. You can register online at www.localevents.com. You must enter the word **Literacy** in the keyword box. If you prefer to pay by check, please make the check available to The Literacy Connection and mail it to Kathleen Taps, 3838 Lakedale Dr., Hilliard, OH, 43026.

Credit from Ashland University:

One semester hour of credit will be available. You must attend all sessions and complete the coursework. Registration for Ashland credit and more information about the requirements for the course will be provided at the first session on Saturday, Sept. 28, 2013.

Participants registering for credit, as well as anyone signing up for \$150 in sessions, will receive a copy of Celebrating Writers: From Possibilities Through Publication by Ruth Ayres with Christi Overman (Stenhouse, 2013) at our January meeting.

General Session: Ruth Ayres

Saturday, Sept. 28, 2013 8:30AM-2:30PM
Indian Run Elementary [View Map](#)
80 West Bridge Street
Dublin, OH 43017
Cost \$75.00

Book Talk: Sally Oddi

Thursday, Jan. 16, 2014: 4:30-6:00 P.M
Cover to Cover Bookstore [View Map](#)
3560 N High St.
Columbus, OH 43214
Cost \$25.00

Study Group Meeting: Carol Price

Wednesday, Mar. 5, 2014: 4:30-6:00 P.M
Slate Hill Elementary [View Map](#)
7625 Alta View Blvd.
Worthington, OH 43085
Cost \$25.00

General Session: Ruth Ayres

Saturday, April 5, 2014 8:30AM-2:30PM
Indian Run Elementary [View Map](#)
80 West Bridge Street
Dublin, OH 43017
Cost \$75.00