

February 2007

A group of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders from First Place School just left 826 Seattle a few minutes ago. Together they wrote a story called *Horns in the Hood*. The main character is a black unicorn named Fluffy who sports an afro. He is, in general, the recipient of quite a bit of taunting, except from Jackie, his only friend. Jackie has a blue Mohawk with pink fringe. This compelling story about differences and dealing with life was written, printed and published in just under two hours here at 826 Seattle. *Horns in the Hood* joins a host of other books written this year such as:

- *Heavy Metal Alien* by Ms. Dunker-Olson's 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Greenwood Elementary
- *Trouble at the Super Slide: How Gary and Peanut Butter Became Friends* by Mr. Crandall's 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> class from First Place
- *Super S'more and the Terrible Toasting Dragon* by Mr. Leung's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class from Whittier Elementary
- *Space Dog's Revenge* by Ms. Elenbaas' 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class.

We've also got some screenplays in our library collection such as *The Dare, the Duck and the Dead: A Screenplay* by Ms. Hartman's 6<sup>th</sup> grade class at Whitman Middle School and *All Because of Ella: A Screenplay* by Ms. Fullerton's 6<sup>th</sup> grade class from Moorelands Elementary.

Our field trips are booked through the end of this school year – no kidding. Classes come in Wednesday and Thursday mornings and finish a story or a screenplay together in two hours. How do we do it? With a host of volunteers, digital cameras, a projector, a book binding machine, Mr. Geoduck (our grouchy publisher) yelling from the back, Harriet, his hairy harried helping hand (thinly disguised as a fur-covered oven mitt) collecting illustrations from our volunteer artist, a volunteer typing the story on the screen - and each student giving the group story an original ending to top it all off.

“Every one of my students leaves 826 Seattle feeling like a real writer,” Greenwood Elementary School teacher Lisa Dunker Olson wrote in a recent evaluation.

And she's right.

There's a reason these trips are booked solid – because every child leaves feeling like a real writer. And, of course, because they're free – like everything we offer young people here at 826 Seattle.

Teachers who wish to be on our mailing list which will include information about when and how to sign up for trips next school year should email [alicepedersen@826seattle.org](mailto:alicepedersen@826seattle.org).

Other news: Justin Allan will be taking over the store in March. He will also oversee 826 Seattle events such as The Mustache-athon and the wishbone breaking contest - and we've heard a rumor that he might organize a march in front of the store to protest the recent announcement that Pluto is not a planet. What do you mean – Pluto is NOT a

planet?!? How can they just take Pluto away from us like that without even a whimper from the populace? Justin thinks that Greenwood Space Travel Supply Co. should lead the charge.

Justin is good. We have stolen him from Archie McPhee, our favorite place from which to steal staff (such as Alex) and if he is as great as Alex, we look forward to stealing more staff as we grow. (Just kidding, Archie.) (By the way, we love Archie McPhee, a company that has been very generous to us. We actually feel sort of bad about stealing Alex and Justin, although not as bad as we feel good about having them with us.)

Speaking of the store, if you foresee any space travel supply needs on your horizon, pop in before February 17<sup>th</sup> as the whole of 826 Seattle and the Greenwood Space Travel Supply Co. will be closed for the week of the 18th. Yup....Seattle Schools are out, we work really hard all the time and we are simply taking the week off. Alex will be catching up on her reading and painting her guest room. Therese will be heading down to Los Angeles. Teri is off to Paris to "apartment sit" while her friends are in Italy. And Alice will be undoing institutionalized racism most of the week....ok ok, she has an Americorp training on the topic.

Lastly, stay tuned for my next update for JAWSL news. As most of you know, April is WASL (Washington Assessment of Standards Learning) month, a time when students across Washington State are tested on their ability to test in math, reading and writing. At 826 Seattle, we feel that math, reading and writing are essential skills, but we also think a sense of humor, kindness and an ability to control whining are equally essential to a healthy life. We're doing our part by introducing the JAWSL (Jokes Are Where Students Learn), a standardized test currently under construction by our highly skilled volunteers which we will administer to any willing drop-in students in April. The test will measure students' ability to get a joke, show a random act of kindness and stifle a whine, all measured with a number 2 or 3 pencil and some circles to fill in. How will we do it? Good question. That part we haven't figured out yet. But we do know extra points will go to students who create an appropriate dance to accompany the JAWSL. I mean, it sounds like a dance, doesn't it... The JAWSL...and by the end of April (aka WASL Month) we'll all be ready to do some dancing.

Happy February, 07  
Teri