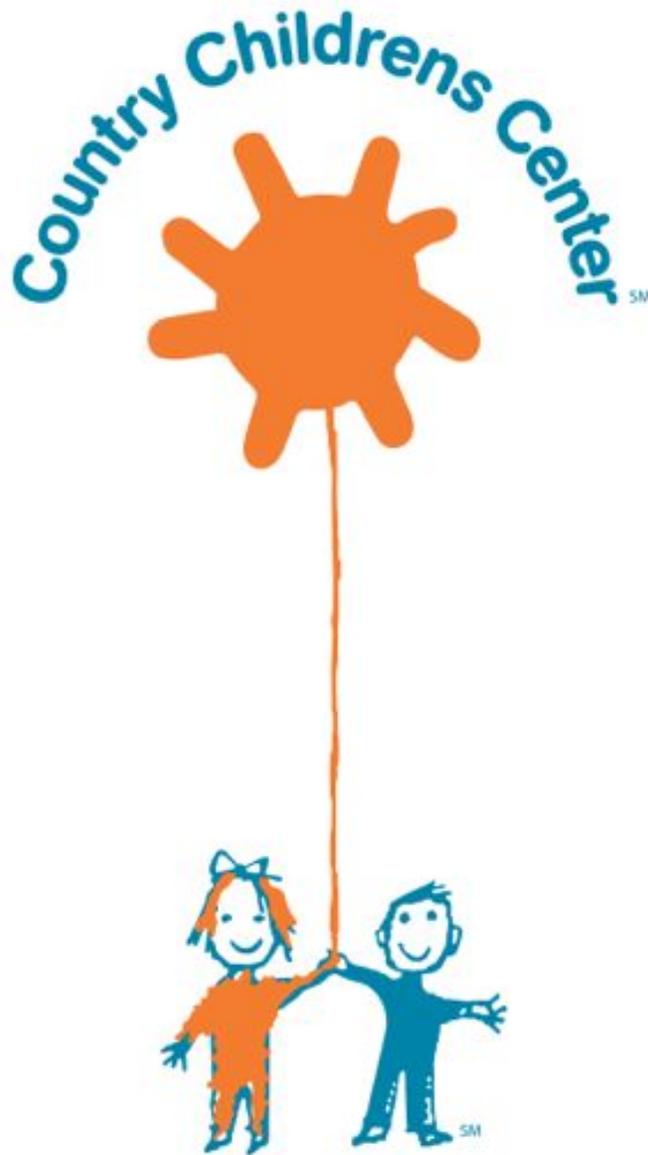

Country Childrens Center

The Magic of StoryTelling

The Country Childrens Center Summer Adventure Camp - July - August 2017



Introduction

Story telling is a skill that taps into areas of creativity often inspired by external events processed through the internal mind of our past experiences. A key element to the narrative process is sharing stories and in order to share we learn that we need others to listen.

In our Country Childrens Center (CCC) program we use a variety of prompts to open the door of the imagination to explore the creation of a story. Depending on the age and abilities of the child, each creates and shares a story with their team members. This cultivates self-confidence, public speaking and most importantly respectful listening.

The children are introduced to theme-related poetry, prose, art or video to encourage their narrative exploration using words and visuals.

Over the course of seven weeks during the CCC Summer Adventure Camp children participated in 30-minute sessions to explore the fundamentals of storytelling. They were in age defined groups - Acorns (4-5 yrs) , Willows (5-6 yrs), Elms (6-7 yrs), Oaks (7-8 yrs), Aspens (8-9 yrs) , Sequoias (10-11 yrs) and Seniors (11-12 yrs).

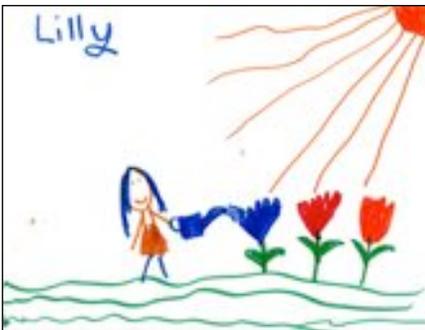
Session curriculum differed by age with the younger Acorns and Willows gravitating to express themselves primarily with drawings and the stories or poems used for creative inspiration were often less complex than those for the older children. However, in all cases the story content was driven by two primary areas of exploration – Self Identity and The Natural World Around Us.

Self Identity

The first few sessions build children's confidence by focusing on what they know best – themselves. As we often hear writing stories is easiest when we write about what we know.

What My Name Means

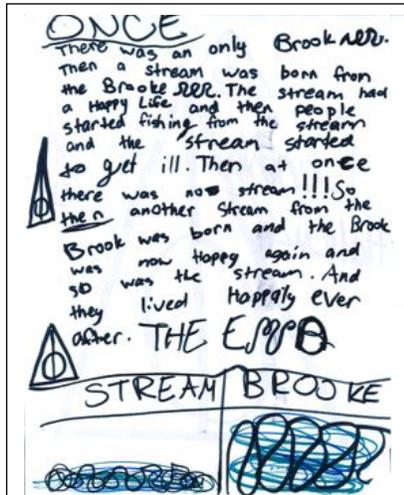
This introductory session starts with a physical interaction using an imaginary ball. All the children stand in a circle and pretend to toss and catch the "ball" as they call out the name of the person to whom they are tossing it. This helps everyone learn one another's name and leads to a discussion about the importance of our name. What does our name mean to us and what does it mean to others. After this talk a prompt is given for the children to tell a story about their name. They are encouraged to consider both the real story as well as anything imaginative that they think of with regards to their name. Each child shares their story with the group.



*Lilies are the meaning of two different girls named Lilly/Lily
Lilly K and Lily F (Willows)*

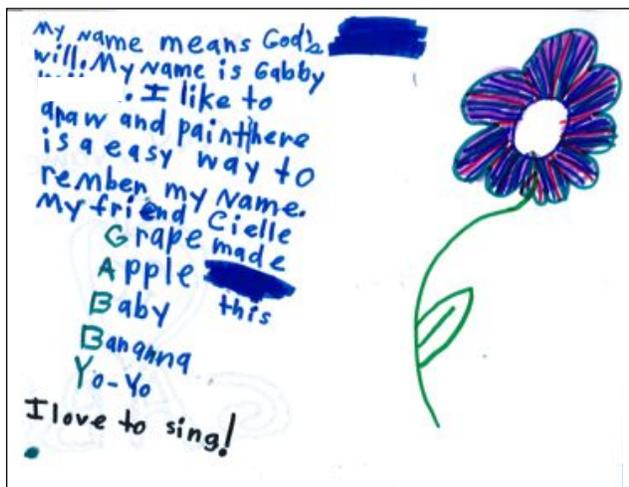


*My name is Sasha Ellie McGill-Dial
Sasha means animals and video games. Ellie means
skateboard and friends. Mcgill-Dial means ferrets,
family, horse and Amanda (horses, ferrets and
horses) Sasha M (Oak)*



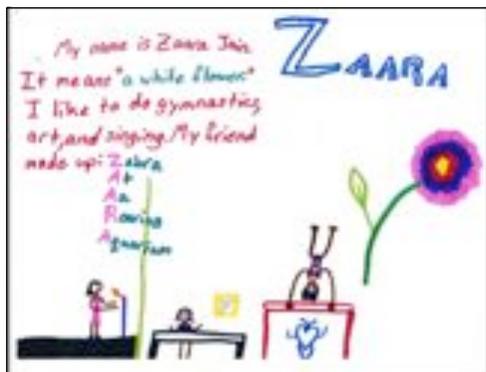
Once there was an only brook. Then a stream was born from the brook. The stream had a happy life and then people started fishing from the stream and the stream started to get ill. Then at once there was no stream!!! So then another stream from the brook was born and the brook was happy again and so was the stream. And they lived happily ever after. The End.

Brooke V (Aspen)



My name means God's will. My name is Gabby. I like to draw and paint. There is a easy way to remember my name. My friend Cielle made this

Grape
 Apple
 Baby
 Banana
 Yo-Yo
 I love to sing!
 Gabby W (Aspen)



My name is Zaara. It means "a white flower" I like gymnastics, art and singing My friend made up:

Zebra
 At
 Aa
 Roaring
 Aquarium
 Zaara J (Oak)

Where I Am From

Another fundamental element of self-identity is linked to the story of where we are from. In this session the children listen to or participate in reading a poem titled "Where I am From". The original poem by George Ella Lyon begins:

"I am from clothespins, from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch. (Black, glistening it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush, the Dutch elm whose long gone limbs I remember as if they were my own."

In order to provide age appropriate relevance a poem is used, which is based on the original, written by Callie S. in the Kentucky Arts Council children's program. It begins this way:

"I am from the sound of laughter
I am from the smell of coconut perfume
The trees rattling in the wind
And the dirt between my toes"

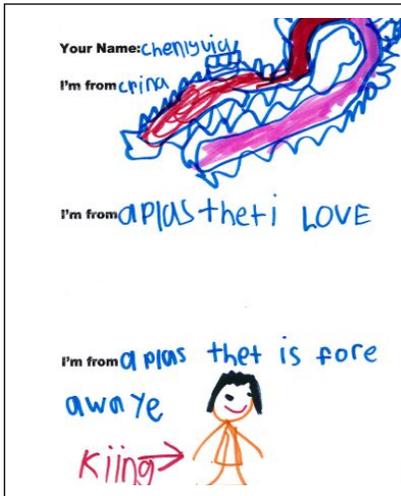
After the reading the prompt given uses a format of three items

I am from...
I am from...
I am from...

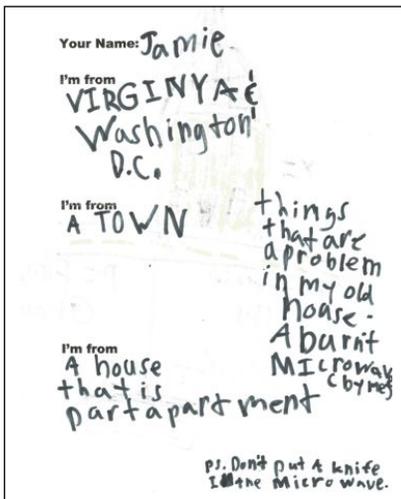
Depending on age and comfort the child may use the format or free write/draw.



Me with Mommy and Daddy in front of our house
Matthew B (Acorn)



I am from China
 I am from a place that I love (Great Wall)
 I am from a place that is far away (with a King)
 Chenlyvia X (Willow)



Map of house, coffee shop, play ground and school

I am from Virginia & Washington D.C.
 I am from a town
 I am from a house that is part apartment
 things that are a problem in my house – a burnt microwave (by me)
 P.S. Don't put a knife in the microwave
 Jamie C (Elm)

I am from the wax to the crayon. I am from the tree to the fruit. I am from the Yankees to the Rangers. I am from beets to music. I am from a puppy to a dog. I am from a kitten to a cat. As you can see I am from a lot of places to another. The End. Water to the sea by Brooke

I am from the wax to the crayon.
 I am from the tree to the fruit.
 I am from the Yankees to the Rangers.
 I am from a puppy to a dog.
 I am from a kitten to a cat.
 As you can see I am from a lot of places to another.
 The End.
 Water to the (brook)
 Brooke V (Aspen)

I am from the water to the sea to the apple to the seed. I am from the crossing of the river. I am from the moon to the sun. I am from the grass to the plains. I am from baking to made. I am from yellow to blue and purple. I am from marker to the ink tip.

I am from the water to the sea to the apple to the seed.
 I am from the crossing of the river
 I am from the moon to the sun
 I am from the grass to the plains
 I am from the baking to made
 I am from yellow to blue and purple.
 I am from marker to ink tip.
 Brooke V (Aspen)

by Mackenzie
 Where I'm From!
 I'm from the sound of the sea.
 I'm from the sound of music.
 I'm from the sound of birds.
 I'm from the sound of aliens.
 I'm from the sound of clocks.
 I'm from the sound of trees
 I'm from the sound of animals
 Where am I from.
 I'm from the planet upside down
 My home



I'm from the sound of the sea.
 I'm from the sound of music.
 I'm from the sound of birds.
 I'm from the sound of aliens.
 I'm from the sound of clocks.
 I'm from the sound of trees.
 I'm from the sound of animals.
 Where am I from.
 I'm from the planet upside down.
 (My friend My home)
 Mackenzie O (Aspen)

I'm from the sounds
of traffic at night
I'm from the place
where you can get anything
and everything I'm from
the place that stays up
all night I'm from the place
that millions roam free I'm from
New York City

I'm from the sounds of traffic at night. I'm from the place where you can get anything and everything. I'm from the place that stays up all night. I'm from the place that millions roam free. I'm from New York City.

I'm from the stars
I'm from the wishes
that young children make
I'm from the trees and the
sky and the flowing rivers
that lead to the sea I'm
from laughter and sounds
of the sea I'm from nature
and nothing will change me.
I'm from Magic.

I'm from the stars, I'm from the wishes that young children make. I'm from the trees and the flowing rivers that lead to the sea. I'm from laughter and sounds of the sea. I'm from nature and nothing will change me. I'm from Magic.

Aubrey L (Aspen)

The World Around Us

At CCC Summer Adventure Camp the children spend many hours outside playing in and exploring the natural world around us and because of this they are always ready to tell a story about their experiences. As this is a ripe source of inspiration we motivate it by using a combination of poetry and current events for a variety of different sessions.

Creepy Crawlies

Bugs and slimy things like frogs, snakes and even snails are endlessly fascinating. And everyone has a favorite creepy crawly to either love or hate? The children were introduced to a humorous poem called Mosquito by J. Patrick Lewis.

I was climbing up the sliding board
When suddenly I felt
A mosquito bite my bottom
And it raised a big red welt.

So I said to that mosquito,
"I'm sure you wouldn't mind
If I took a pair of tweezers
And I tweezered your behind!"

He shriveled up his body
And he shuffled to his feet,
And he said, "I'm awfully sorry
But a skeeter's got to eat!
Still, there are mosquito manners,
And I must have just forgot 'em.
And I swear I'll never never never
Bite another bottom."

But a minute later Archie Hill
And Buck and Theo Brown
Were horsing on the monkey bars,
Hanging upside down.

They must have looked delicious
From a skeeter's point of view
'Cause he bit 'em on the bottoms,
Archie, Buck and Theo too!

You could hear 'em goin' HOLY!
You could hear 'em goin' WHACK!
You could hear 'em cuss and holler,
Goin' smack, smack, smack.

A mosquito's awful sneaky,
A mosquito's mighty sly,
But I never never never
Thought a skeeter'd tell a lie.

Seeing the humor in this poem as well as the use of expressive words like "whack" and "smack, smack, smack" led to the prompt for the children to write a story or poem about a creepy crawley.



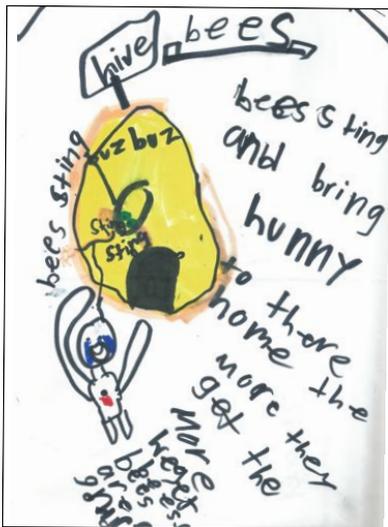
Snail Snail your shell makes you cute
Aiden B (Willow)



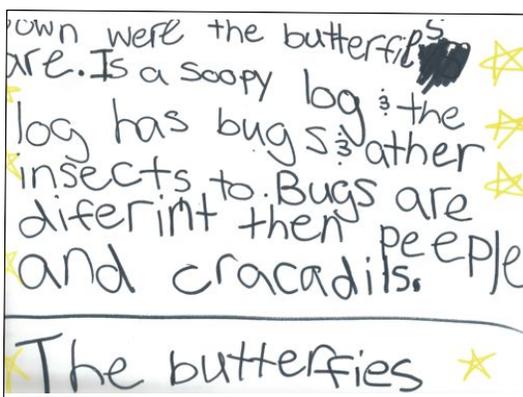
Butterfly, Butterfly super quick flapper
Brooke J (Willow)



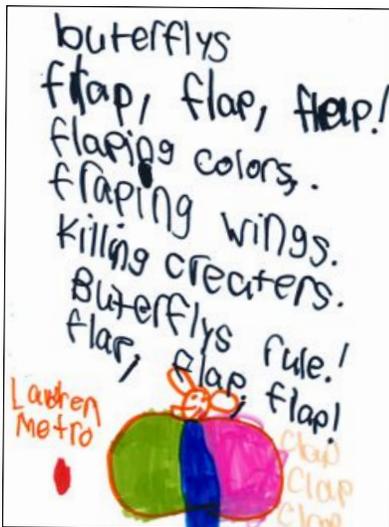
I love lady bugs
They are pretty and the spots are very pretty.
Liliana T (Oak)



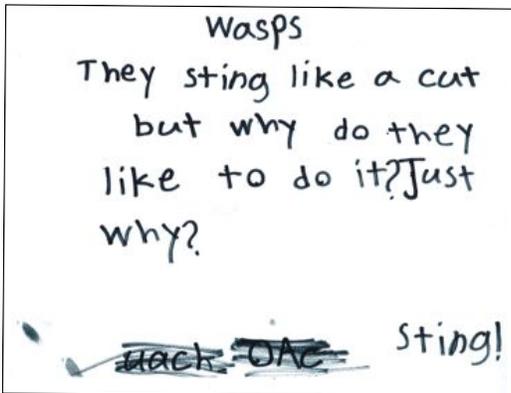
bees hive
bzzz bzzz sting sting bees sting
bees sting and bring honey to there home
the more they get
the more we get
bees fly
bees are nice
Michael D (Elm)



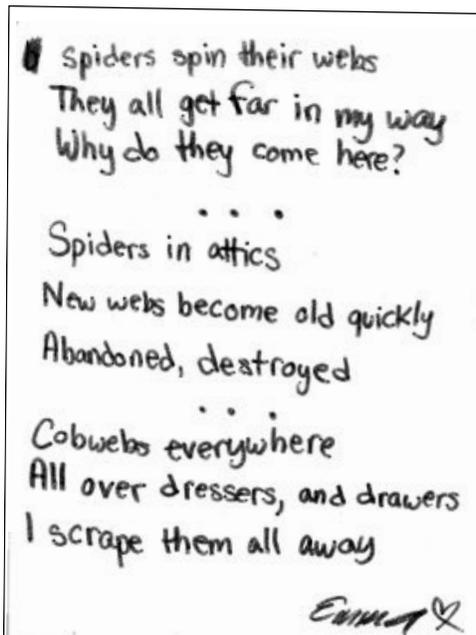
The Butterflies
Down where the butterflies are is a soopy log
and the log has insects too. Bugs are different
than people and crocodiles.
Sydney H (Elm)



Butterflies
 Flap, flap, flap
 Flapping colors
 Flapping wings.
 Killing creatures.
 Butterflies rule!
 Flap, flap, flap!
 Lauren M (Oak)



Wasps
 They sting like a cut
 but why do they
 like to do it? Just
 why?
~~stach OAC~~ sting!
 Luke S (Oak)



Spiders spin their webs
 They all get far in my way
 Why do they come here?
 Spiders in the attics
 New webs become old quickly
 Abandoned, destroyed
 Cobwebs everywhere
 All over dressers, and drawers
 I scrape them all away
 Emma P (Senior)

What Animals Say

An annual camp event is the Talent Show. During the week that leads up to the performance the children learn songs and build confidence singing karaoke. One morning the children were performing to a popular song called "What Does the Fox Say?"

Dog goes woof, cat goes meow.

Bird goes tweet, and mouse goes squeak.

Cow goes moo. Frog goes croak, and the elephant goes toot.

Ducks say quack and fish go blub, and the seal goes ow ow ow.

But there's one sound that no one knows...

What does the fox say?

Big blue eyes, pointy nose, chasing mice, and digging holes.

Tiny paws, up the hill, suddenly you're standing still.

Your fur is red, so beautiful, like an angel in disguise.

But if you meet a friendly horse, will you communicate by mo-o-o-o-orse, mo-o-o-o-orse, mo-o-o-o-orse?

How will you speak to that h-o-o-orse, h-o-o-orse, h-o-o-orse?

What does the fox say?!

The lyrics by Ylvis are so compelling and set the stage for a prompt that raises our age-old fascination with the question of "what are animals trying to say?"

Gillian
When a dog goes ruff I think
they are saying... hi, hi, hi, hi, hi.
For example when you
ring the door bell the dog goes crazy
cause they think that is someone
there And they want to protect
you.



"When a dog goes ruff
I think they are saying ... hi,
hi ,hi ,hi .
For example
When you ring the doorbell
The dog goes crazy 'cause
They think there is someone
there
And they want to protect you

Gillian R (Willow)

The Wind

Sometimes the natural world around us is less tangible than an insect or an animal – the wind has inspired many poems and essays. One childhood favorite is “Wind on the Hill” by A. A. Milne.

No one can tell me,
Nobody knows,
Where the wind comes from,
Where the wind goes.

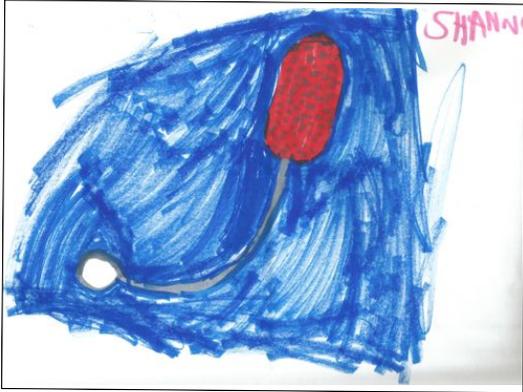
It's flying from somewhere
As fast as it can,
I couldn't keep up with it,
Not if I ran.

But if I stopped holding
The string of my kite,
It would blow with the wind
For a day and a night.

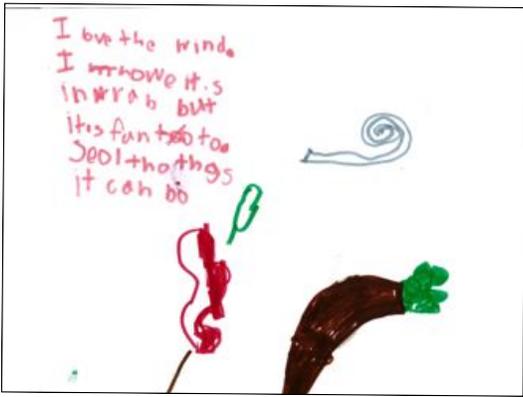
And then when I found it,
Wherever it blew,
I should know that the wind
Had been going there too.

So then I could tell them
Where the wind goes...
But where the wind comes from
Nobody knows.

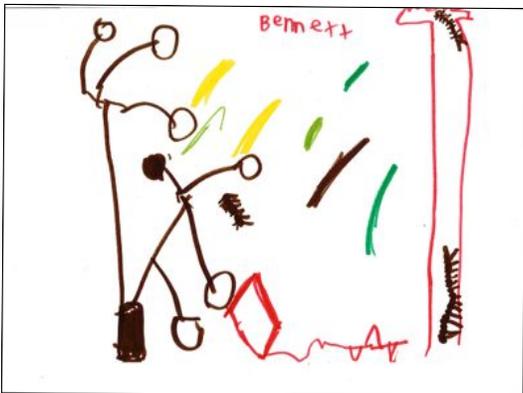
After discussing the idea of where does the wind come from the children are prompted to write their own poem or story about the wind – some results were as minimal as a sheet of paper bowing in the wind while others were more dramatic concerned with the power and awe of something you cannot see.



Red balloon blowing in the wind
Shannon M (Acorn)



I love the wind. I know it's in (visible) but it is fun to see the things it can do
Ari B (Willow)

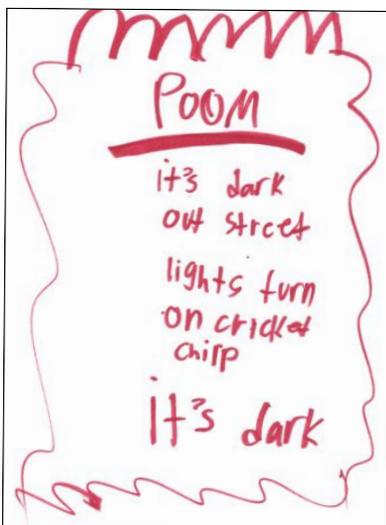
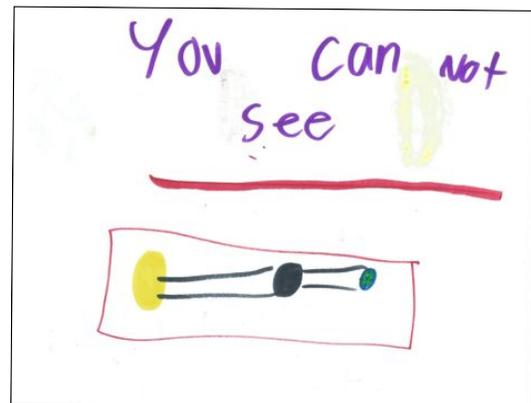


Tree with kite and caterpillars blown by the wind
Bennett K (Willow)

The Eclipse

This past summer brought us the spectacle of the solar eclipse and though our location was not on the path of totality there was a palpable excitement about the event. The fact that we had the children stay inside in response to concerns about the damage looking at the sun could cause, created the perfect opportunity to explore both the science, as well as myths and legends surrounding this solar phenomena. The New York Times ran a special section with charts and graphs that the children examined to understand the true science versus the ancient fables.

They were then prompted to create their own story to explain this celestial happening – science and fantasy merged.



The moon has covered the sun, it's dark.
You can not see

Poem
It's dark out
Street lights turn on
Crickets chirp
It's dark

Michael D (Aspen)

What Makes a Story

Beginning, Middle and End

One core storytelling concept occupied several sessions. This focused on the structure of a story - the idea that it should have a beginning, middle and an end. After discussing these three elements, a story created by our staff specialist Miss Morgan was shared so that they could see how an imaginative a story could be expressed in just three pages.

Ducky Mo Mo Saves the World

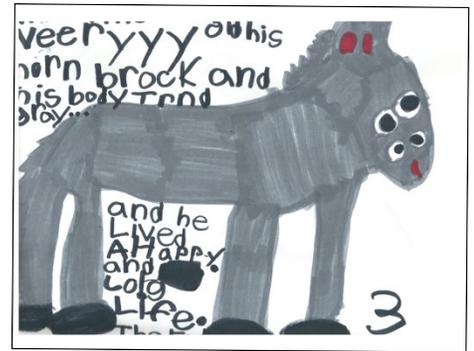
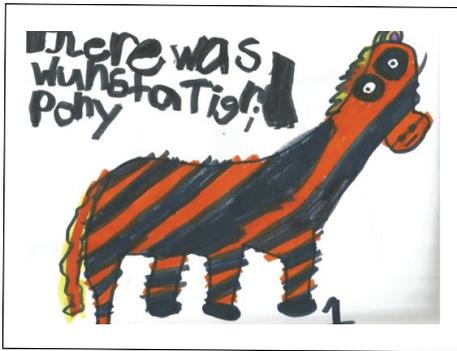
Ducky Mo Mo plunges into the volcano

Ducky Mo Mo emerges from the volcano and saves the earth from a giant tsunami

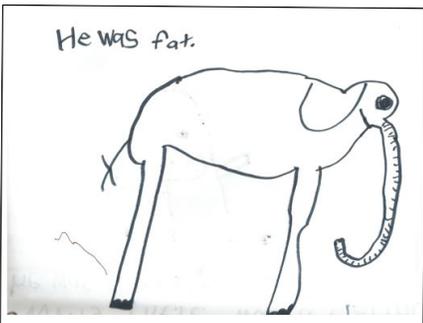
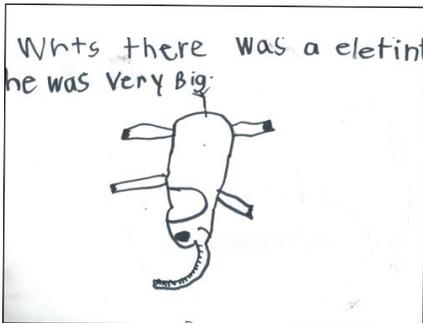
Ducky Mo Mo cleans up the volcanic destruction



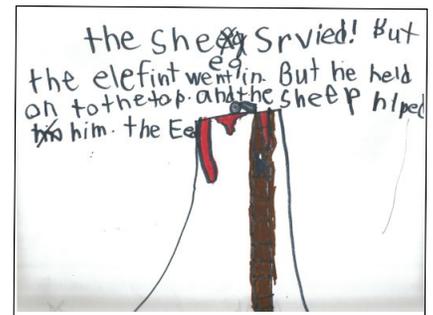
The children were then prompted to write their own creative story using pictures and words on three sheets of paper.

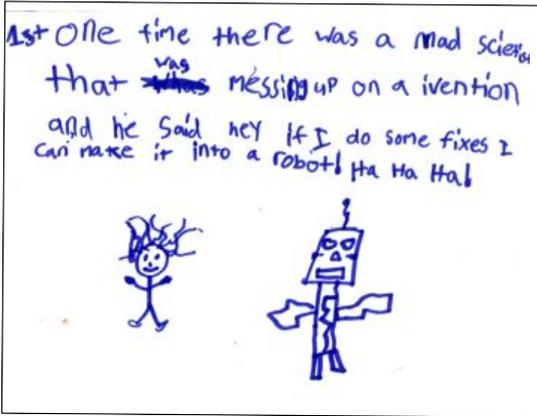


There was once a tiger pony
 When he was older he turned brown and grew a horn
 When he was very old his horn broke and his body turned gray
 And he lived a happy and long life Ava P (Elm)

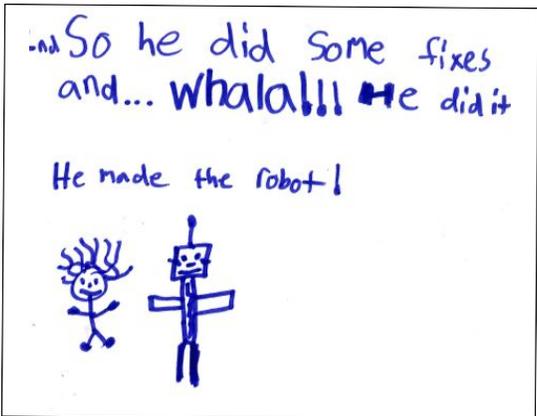


Once there was an elephant. He was very big, he was fat. He fell into a volcano, he saw a sheep. They were scared. The sheep survived but the elephant went in. And the sheep helped him - the end.
 Noah K (Elm)

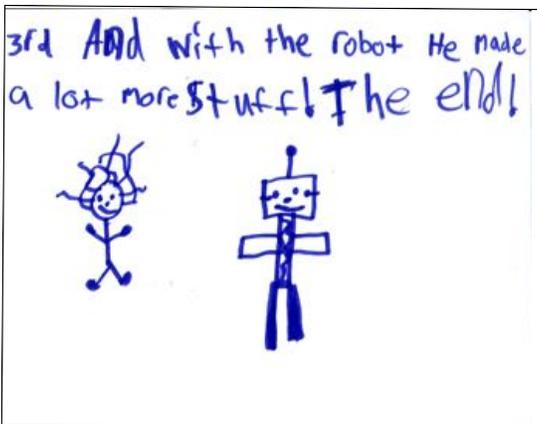




Once there was a mad scientist that was
messing up a invention and he said hey if I do
some fixes I can make it into a robot! ha ha ha!



So he made some fixes and...whala!!! He did it
He made a robot!



And with the robot he made a lot more stuff!
The end!

Dylan N (Elm)

Words – You Can Write Like Shakespeare

There were also some side exercises on the importance of words – creating a new one or way of using one encouraged by the example of William Shakespeare.

YOU CAN WRITE LIKE SHAKESPEARE TOO

Now pick one from column A, B, and C to make a three sentence story – use each choice once in each of the 3 sentences

COLUMN A

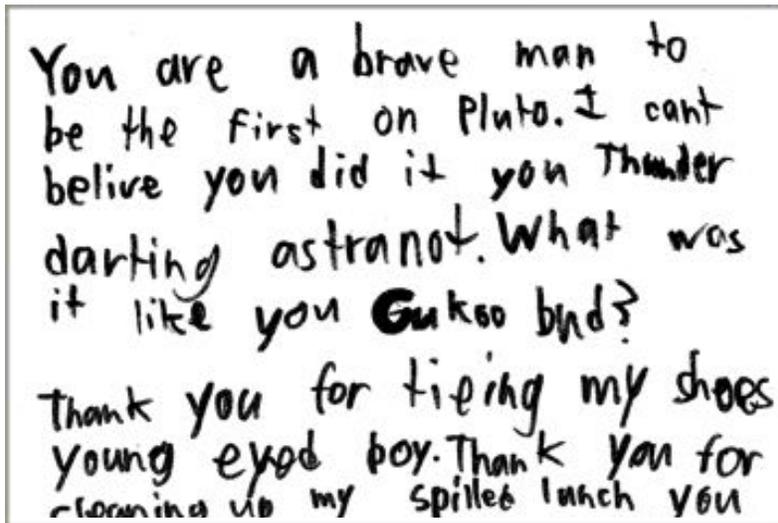
Rare
Sweet
Fruitful
Brave
Sugared
Flowering
Gallant
Delicate
Celestial
Beloved

COLUMN B

Honey-tongued
Well-wishing
Fair-faced
Best-tempered
Tender-hearted
Tiger-booted
Smooth-faced
Thunder-darting
Sweet=suggesting
Young-eyed

COLUMN C

Smile
Toast
Cukoo-bud
Nose-flower
Wafer-cake
Pigeon-egg
Welsh cheese
Song
True-penny
Valentine



You are a brave man to be the first on Pluto. I can't believe you did it you thunder-darting astronaut. What was it like you cukoo- bud? Thank you for tying my shoes young-eyed boy. Thank you for cleaning up my spilled lunch you...

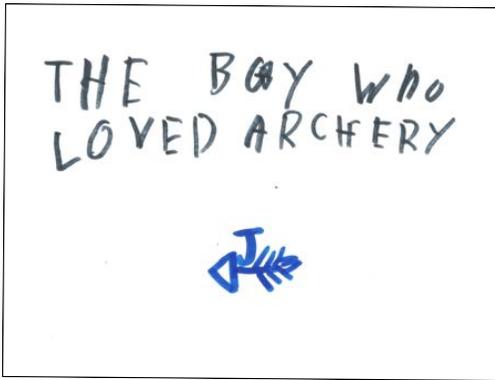
Cecil T (Sequoia)

Expanding with Detail

Once they had their basic 3-element story the children were ready to expand and add detail to the narrative. The goal was to ultimately use a stop/motion movie app on ipads that we provided. This would allow them to turn their stories into a “film” with pictures and a voice over narration. This exercise was challenging as the pictures had to align with the narration, which took time and patience. However, the results, some of which can be [accessed here](#), were very creative and allowed a lasting narrator’s ownership for their stories that can be shared beyond a one-on-one interaction.



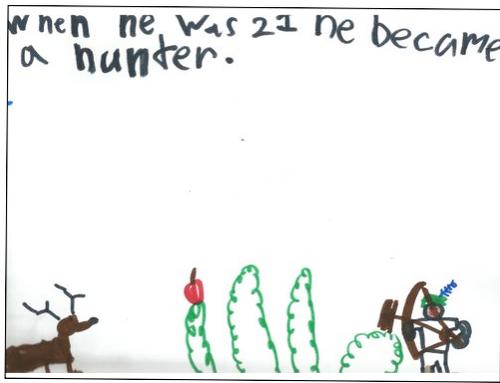
The Biggest Snow Monster Ever
The Snow Monster chased the
people
The Snow Monster lifted the shed
They became friends
They had a snowball fight
Ian P (Elm)



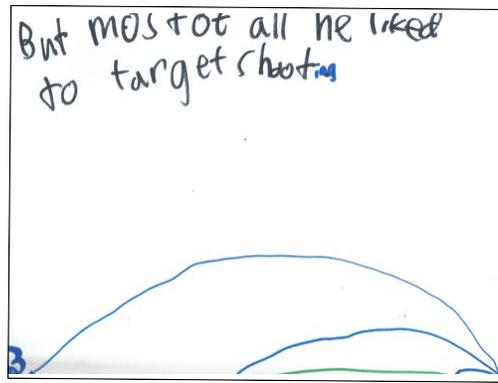
The Boy Who Loved Archery



There once was a boy who loved archery.



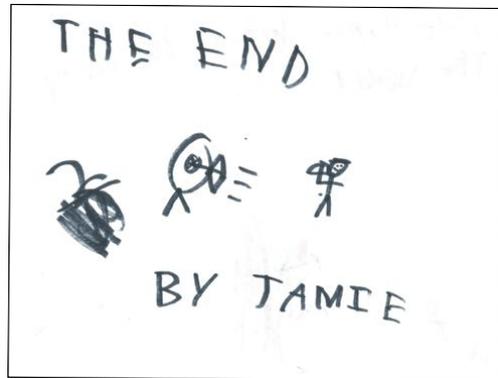
When he was 21 he became a hunter.



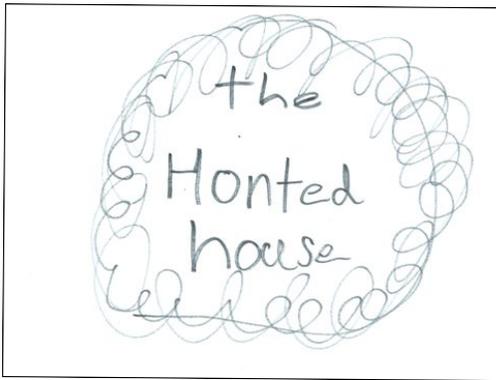
But most of all he liked to target shot.



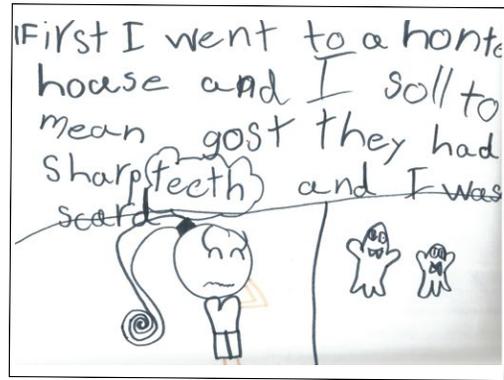
Some time later he saved the world.



The End. By Jamie C (Elm)



The Haunted House



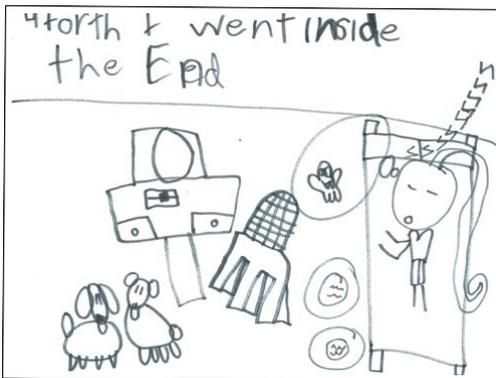
First I went to a haunted house and saw two mean ghosts, they had sharp teeth and I was scared



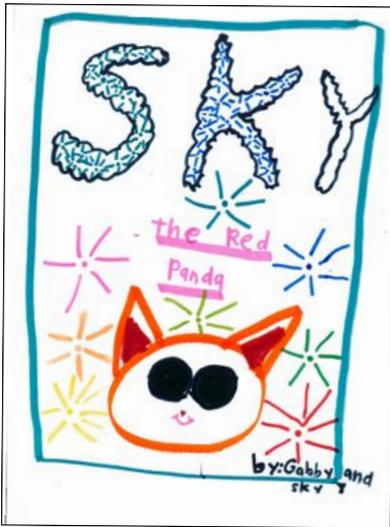
Second the two ghosts tried to scare me away and my dog.



Third I ran home with my dog.



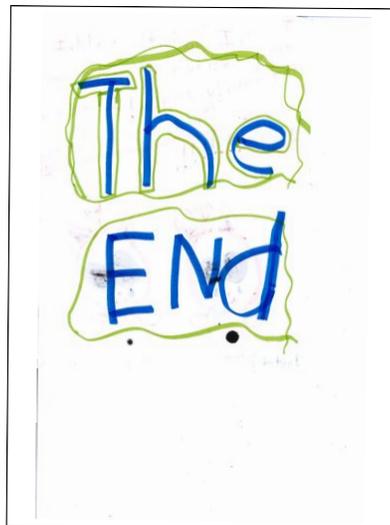
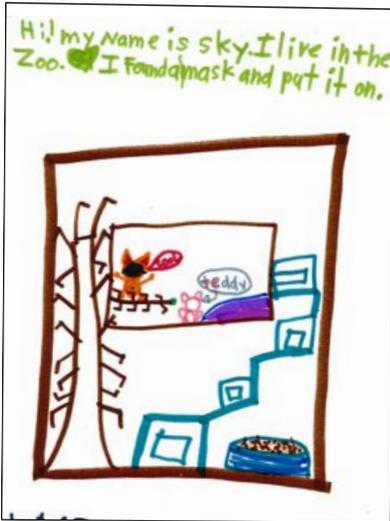
Fourth I went inside. The End Jasmine F (Elm)

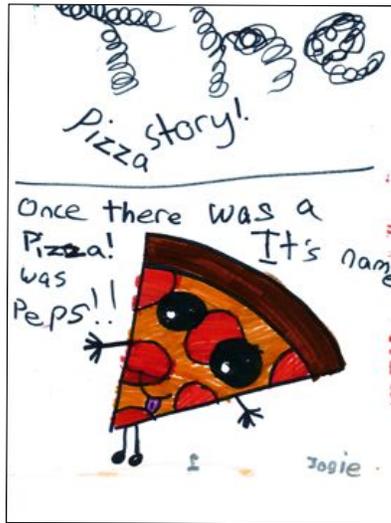
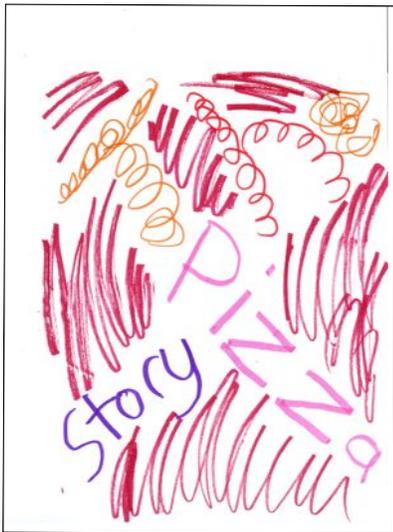


Sky The Red Panda

Hi my name is Sky. I live in the Zoo.
 I found a mask and put it on.
 I feel like dancing I said. I think I danced good. I used
 my boom box.
 Today I go in the wild.
 I am so excited. I get to see my family again!
 I see my mom. Omg, Omg, Omggggg!!!!

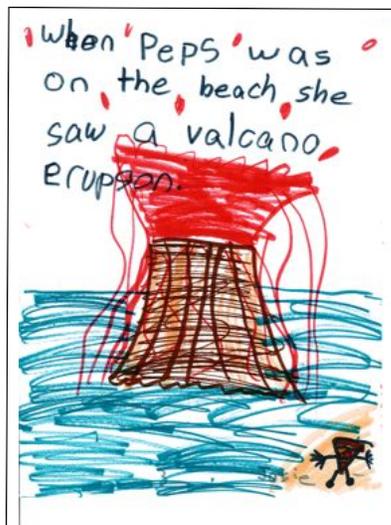
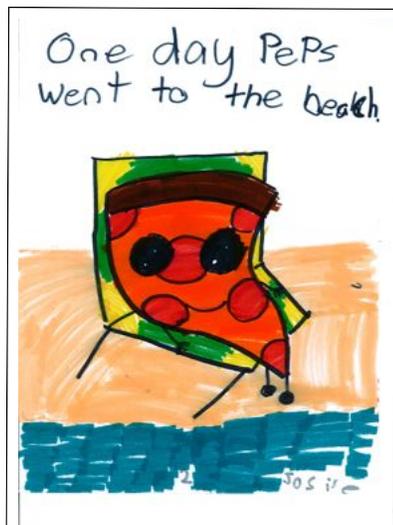
The End Gabby W (Aspen)





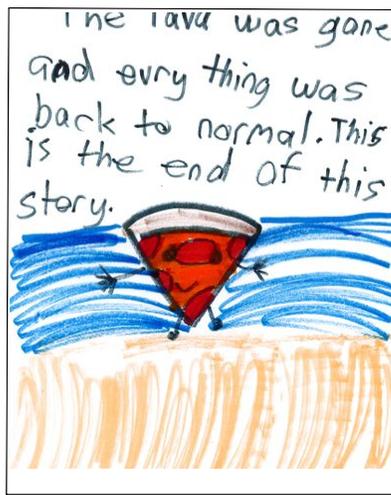
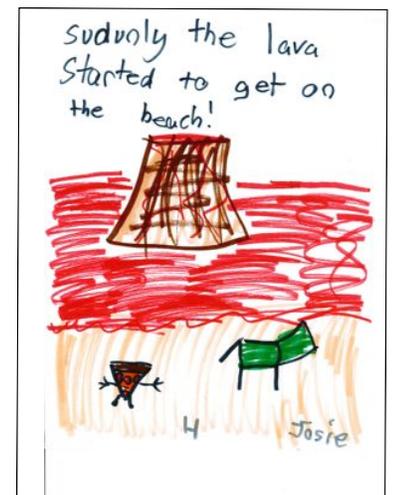
The Pizza Story

Once there was a Pizza! Its name was Peps!!



One day Peps went to the beach.

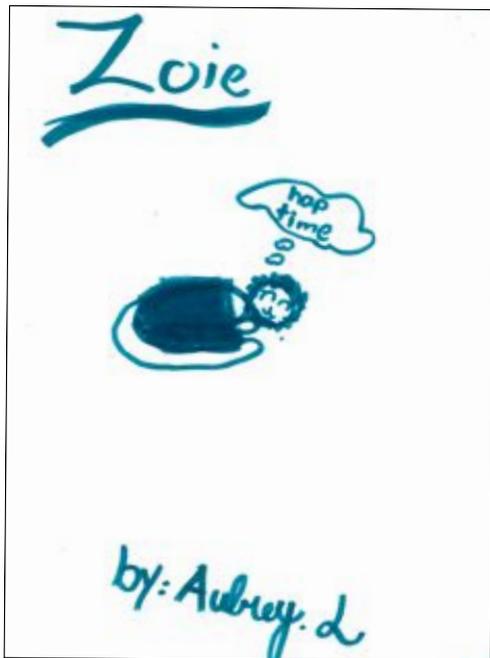
When Peps was on the beach she saw a volcano erupt.



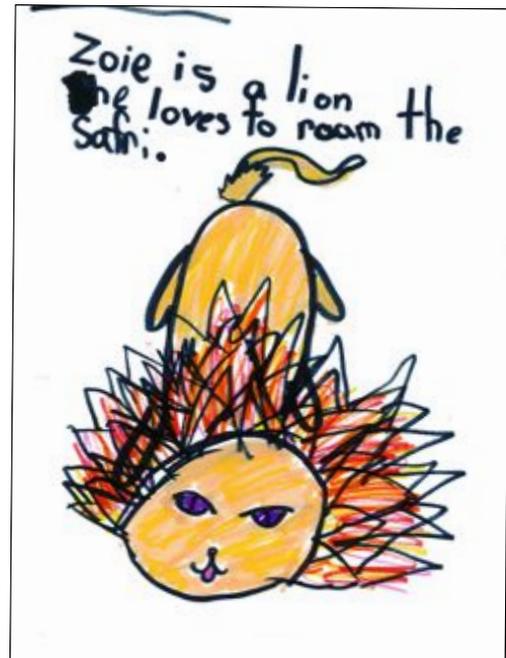
Suddenly the lava started to get on the beach!

The lava was gone and everything was back to normal. This is the end of the story.

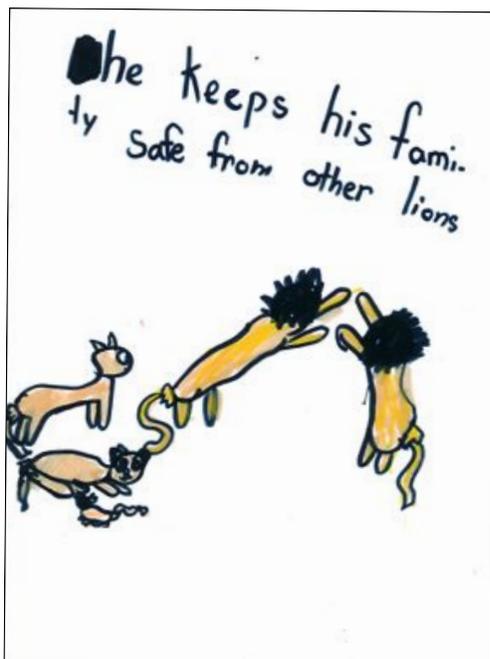
Josie P (Aspen)



Zoie (Nap Time)



Zoie is a lion. He loves to roam the savannah.



He keeps his family safe from other lions.



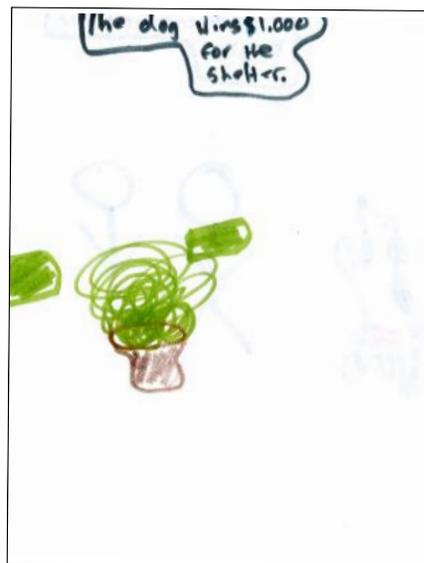
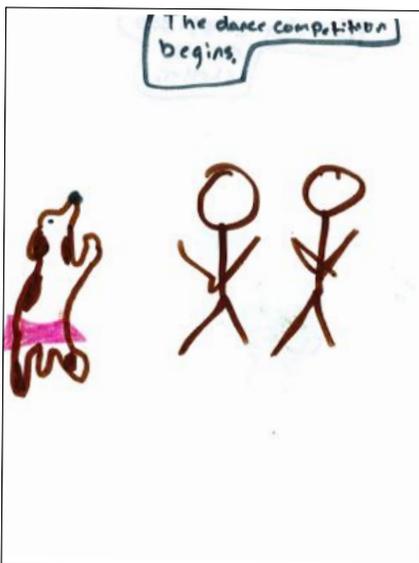
While Zoie protects their territory the females hunt and take care of the babies. The End
Aubrey L (Aspen)



Once a little girl found an abandoned dog.

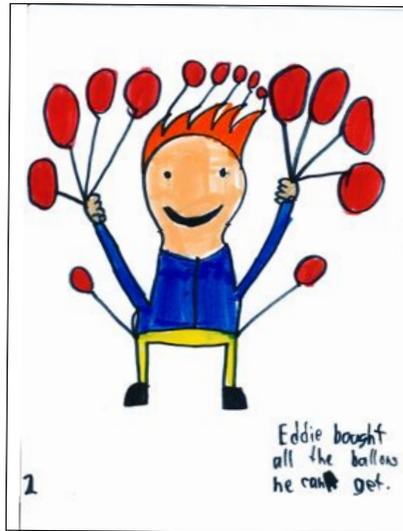
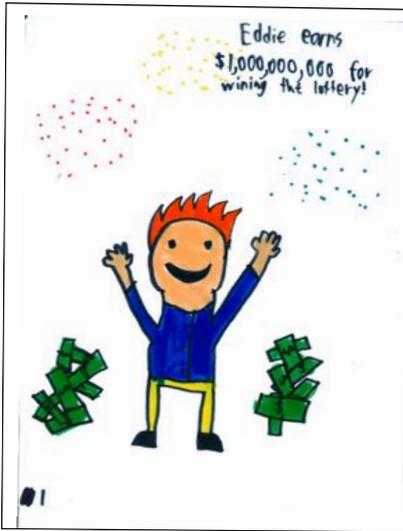
The little girl brings the dog to the animal hospital.
The dog is really happy. She learns how to dance.

The little girl enters the dog in a dance competition against humans.



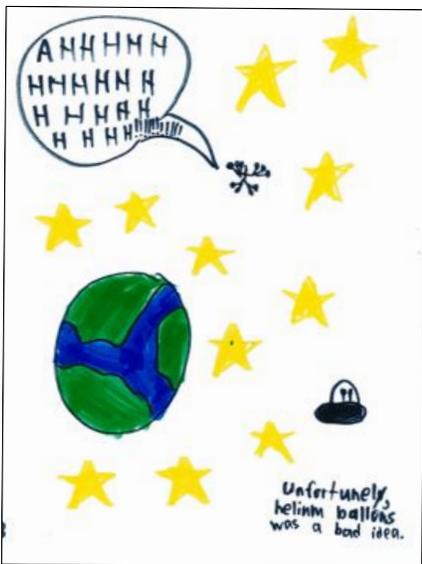
The dance competition begins.
The dog wins \$1,000 for the animal shelter.

Jesse P (Sequoia)

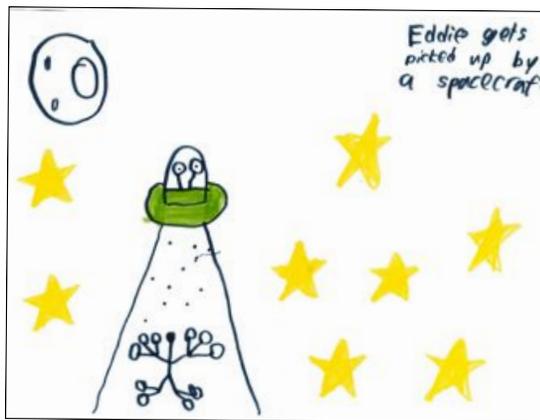


Eddie earns \$1,000,000,000 for winning the lottery.

Eddie bought all the balloons he could get.



AHHHHH. Unfortunately helium balloons was a bad idea.

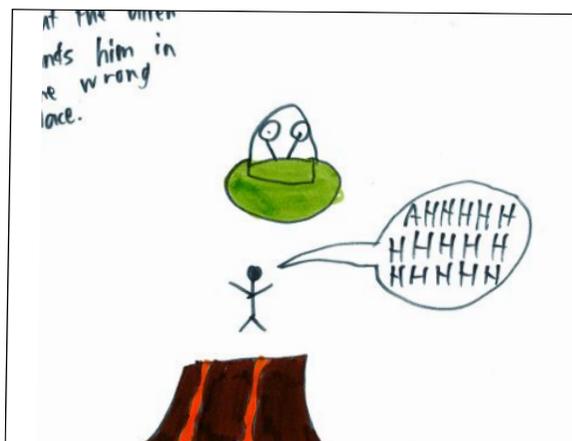
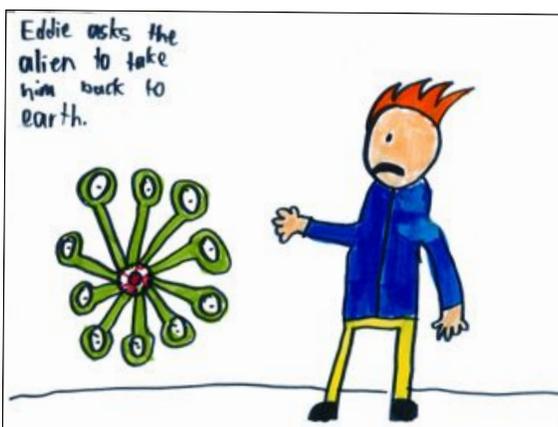


Eddie gets picked up by a spacecraft.

Eddie asks the alien to take him back to earth.

But the aliens drop him in the wrong place. AHHHHHH

Cecil T (Sequoia)



Focus on Community

During the sessions when the older children were creating the more complex three element stories the Acorns and Willows focused on the meaning and message of stories.

A storybook entitled "Love Your Neighbor" by Arthur Dorbin was a primary resource. This is a collection of stories about values and virtues with beautiful illustrations by Jacqueline Rogers.

Being Different

This session focused on a story called "Black and White All Over" that shares a tale based on two different herds of zebras –one that is white with black stripes and the other which is black with white stripes. Of course this means they really looked just the same, which is the point of the story. Small, insignificant differences should not become a reason to judge or discriminate; so the prompt for the children was to make drawings that expresses something they think is different, special and good.



One flower grew bigger than the others
Sofia R (Acorn)



Living under the sea
Parker S (Acorn)



Solar powered race car
Michael A (Acorn)

Sharing/Giving

“The Kindness of Squirrels” tells of the self-sacrifice of two squirrel friends who grow up and help one another out without either one being aware of the giving and sharing they each have been secretly providing. The children were prompted to draw a story telling about a time they shared with someone.



Two squirrels sharing
Dylan O (Acorn)



Giving a gift to my neighbor
Sofia R (Acorn)

What I am Good At

A story called “Chopsticks” has a mentor/student relationship between two hippos. The elder tries to change the way the younger uses chopsticks only to learn that the younger one’s approach works just as well and best for him. The prompt here had the children “draw” a story about what they do best or a talent that they have.

Drawing - watching a kitty on TV
Shannon M (Acorn)



Buying and playing my ninja game
Steven K (Acorn)





My Talent is to make friends

Scarlett B (Willow)

Island Nations

Our last session with the older children was a true communal experience, which focused on the poem "No Man is an Island" by John Donne.

No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

After discussing the meaning and explaining the references to "for whom the bell tolls" the children were prompted to create their own island. They were to consider what would be important to have on the island and what might make it of interest to another island to connect with or visit. The medium was either construction paper or clay.

Once the islands were completed each person "presented" their island and took questions about the various assets.

The final exercise was for the islands to make connections either by sea or sky. Some islands chose to build bridges to one another while some sought to connect by subway system. This concluded with naming their island nations.



Elms with there Islands of The Volcanoes, Dinosaurs and Peace



The Oaks with their Strong Island Nation



Aspens named theirs the Friendship Islands



Sequoias and the MaJIC Islands



Final Thoughts

Asking children to sit and listen during summer camp is always a challenge. Usually their hearts are pounding and breath is short from running around outside.

Distractions are abundant.

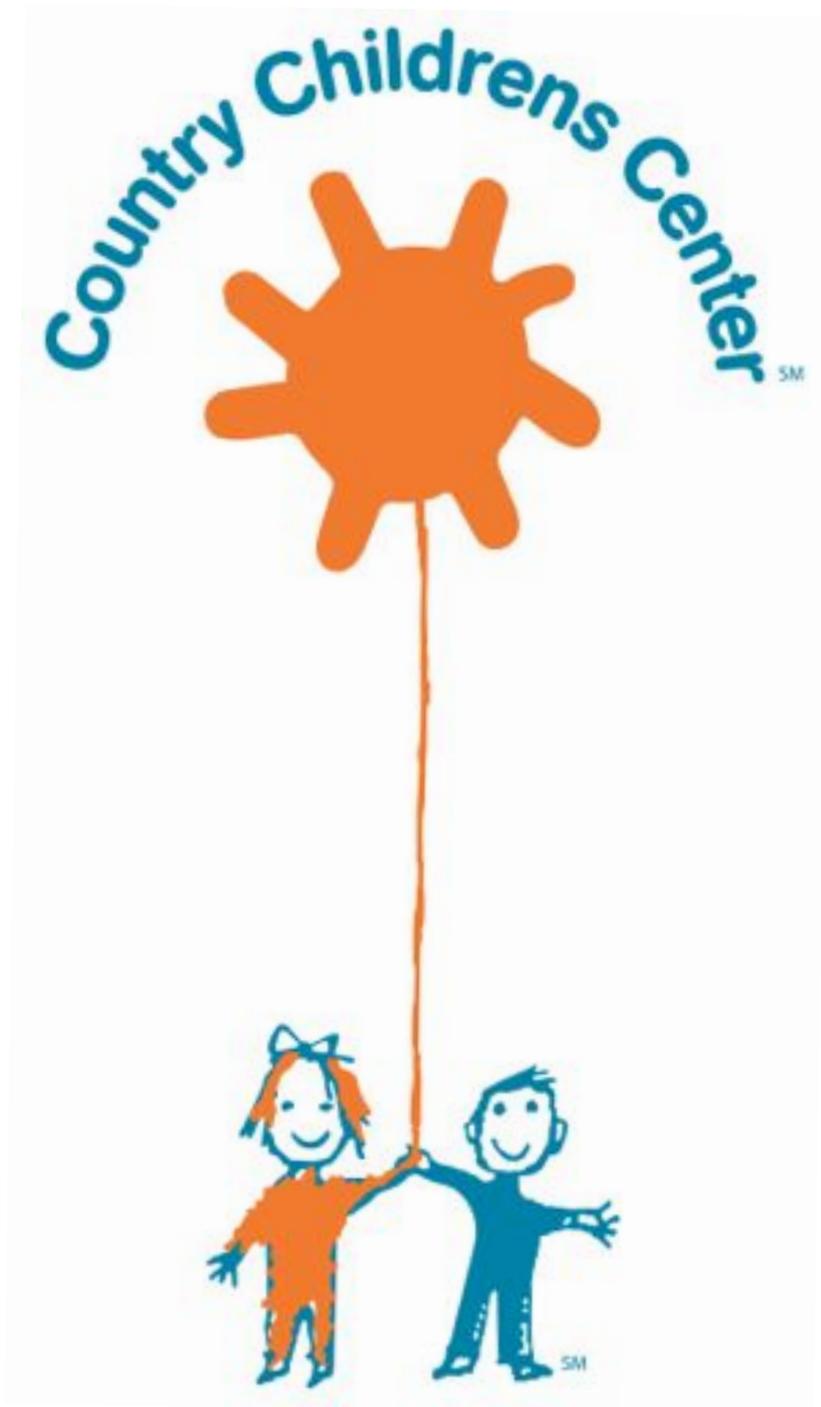
However, words and ideas create engagement and the joy of inspiration is contagious. The results define our desire to connect our internal feelings with the external - the community of people and the world we live in.

To be a storyteller is a gift and a responsibility – one must listen in order to share.



Our story telling specialist, Anne Cunney (aka Miss Anne) is a graduate of the Narrative Medicine Master Program at Columbia University. She has been applying the pedagogical fundamentals of attention, representation and affiliation with children, young adults, as well as medical school residents and adults interested in how story telling creates compassion for self and others.

This is the first series of workshops for the children of CCC Summer Adventure Camp. We look forward to more opportunities to support our story tellers of the future.



Little Steps...Big FeatsSM