

Students get taste of literary life at academy
by Elizabeth Cady
Writers Academy 2009



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Teaching elementary school children to unravel impressions, memories and stories and reformulate those thoughts into poetry and prose was the focus of the semester-long Writer's Academy.

The creative writing program, which is in its fifth year, is provided by a handful of Georgia Highlands College student volunteers and funded by a Communities in Schools grant. Thirty-one students from Main Elementary and West Central Elementary participated during the Spring 2009 semester.

A publication and reading reception was at the Rome Civic Center on Tuesday night as an opportunity for students to showcase their work.

"I liked just writing stories and we could express our feelings," said Derricus Clarke, 9, who wrote a poem entitled "New York."

The students chosen for the program have to express a particular interest in writing, and be willing to dedicate an hour after school each week when volunteers meet and work with the participants.

"It's an opportunity for kids to come together after school for fun and fellowship," said West Central Principal Janice Merritt. "They explore writing in a creative way. Volunteers bring in some type of visual and that's where the writing comes from."

The program instructor and manager, Jonathan Hershey, is a professor at GHC. He initiated the Writer's Academy in Rome after he was part of a similar program in the Alabama University

System.

”The idea behind it is to give students that have some creative talent, an outlet they might not normally have,” said Hershey.

Main Elementary Principal Dawn Williams said the Writer’s Academy had been such a success that they planned to participate again next year.

“I learned to describe places better and he (Hershey) gave us candy every day,” said Miles Threadgill, 12, who read his poem “Camden,” to a captive audience.

Ashley Romo, a 9-year-old from West Central said she learned a lot throughout the semester and had a lot of fun, but she like the end of the year party best.

“It feels special to get to read in front of everybody,” said Romo smiling and adding she was also pleased to share celebratory pizza and cake after the reading with her creative writing cohorts.

The Writer’s Academy is also sponsored by the 100 Black Men of Rome-Northwest Georgia.

New York

New York, so fun, so big,

so interesting.

I can see the clouds, I can see

the road, the trees, the famous people’s faces.

The cars will curve, the people will run

The cars will shine. The people

will be tough, the clouds

will be crushed, the roads will be dark, the

faces who win the Oscars will be blue

— *Derricus Clarke*

Camden

Open fields

Flowing rivers

Evergree trees

Always running in and out of doors

We run

We chase

Then we settle down for a drink

In the Middle of the cool shinning sun

The big blue sky

The very cool wind in my face

The soft green grass

My heaven on earth

There's fun everywhere

Relatives to see

Secrets to discover

My half home Camden, Alabama

Eating watermelons

Hunting and fishing

Camping and swimming

This is the place I love

— *Miles Threadgill*