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Bonita Unified Elementary Students’ Creative Stories Come Alive Through The Imagination Machine

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE - Gladstone Elementary School students gasped and cheered with delight as they watched their stories come to life – and learned about the essential elements of storytelling – during a March 28 performance of “The Writing Show” by The Imagination Machine.

Formed in 1981 by a classroom teacher with a background in theater, The Imagination Machine selects stories written by students and performs them in the form of school assemblies, with the goal of encouraging students to explore their imagination through creative writing. The stories are fleshed out into complete productions featuring professional actors, music, and costumes.

“This is an assembly our staff looks forward to each year. We love to see the students’ stories come alive through the talented actors that visit our school,” said Gladstone Elementary kindergarten teacher Nancy Simpson, who helped organize this year’s assembly. “This brings comradery to our school as the students cheer on their friends that are announced as authors.”

The Imagination Machine assemblies have been a treasured tradition at Gladstone Elementary for more than 20 years. This year, six stories were selected by The Imagination Machine and performed for Gladstone students, including three stories written collaboratively by entire classrooms and three written by individual students.

Amid laughter-inducing performances of “The Lost Donut and Teddy,” “Lost Ball,” “Creepy Sunglasses,” “Monsters in Room 9,” and “The Worst Day Ever,” The Imagination Machine performers taught students about personification, conflict, and antagonists and the role they play in creative writing, citing examples in each of the stories they performed.

“I can’t believe my story actually made it and it was really cool to see them perform it,” said second-grader Jakris Padilla, whose story “Cat Spy” closed out the assembly and had the audience cheering for the protagonist’s triumph over an evil roach. “I was inspired by another story I read and thought a cat spy would be a good hero and a roach would be a really good villain, and it seemed to work out. I’m really proud.”

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BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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PHOTOS:

BUSD_IMAGINATION1: Gladstone Elementary second-grader Jakris Padilla showcases his Certificate of Writing Achievement after The Imagination Machine actors performed his original story, “Cat Spy,” during an assembly on March 28.

BUSD_IMAGINATION2: Gladstone Elementary students cheer as The Imagination Machine actors perform six stories written by their peers during the organization’s “The Writing Show” assembly.

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