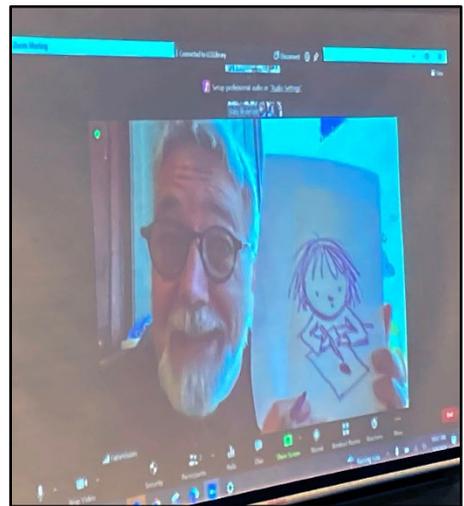


Virtual Author Visit

Lewis & Clark Students Visit Virtually with Bestselling Author Peter H. Reynolds

Lewis & Clark Elementary School Gifted and Talented Teacher Stacy Anderson's essay about why her students deserve a virtual visit with award-winning children's author and illustrator Peter H. Reynolds was right on "The Dot."

Anderson won the "Be You!" essay contest sponsored by Scholastic and she and the 59 students in the Gifted and Talented Program at Lewis & Clark received a virtual visit from Reynolds. During the visit, Reynolds read aloud from his books, answered student questions, and gave a virtual tour of his bookstore, Blue Bunny Books. The school also received a classroom set of his book, "Be You."



Reynolds is a New York Times bestselling author and illustrator of such children's books as "The Dot," "I Am Human," "Happy Dreamer," "The Word Collector," and "Be You!" In "Be You!" Reynolds encourages readers to embrace their individuality and to "be your own work of art" because "there is one, and only one, YOU." During the visit, he said he always wanted to be an author from the time he was a child.



Virtual Author Visit, continued

“I started reading books when I was in first or second grade,” he said. “And then I realized, ‘Human beings made these books. I’m a human being. I can write and I can draw, I would like to try it.’”

Anderson called the virtual visit with the bestselling author, a career highlight from her 32 years as a teacher. She says she uses Reynolds’ books in her instructional programming throughout the year. Every year on “International Dot Day,” on September 15, the day “The Dot” was published, she comes up with new ways to celebrate the book and its themes of creative self-expression, self-esteem, growth mindset, perseverance, and connection. She uses “The Word Collector” to help emphasize the importance of word choice in writing and speech, the book “Ish” to explain the concept of a growth mindset vs. a fixed mindset, and “Be You!” to help students find their personal strengths and feel good about being just the way they are.



While explaining his inspiration for writing “Be You!” Reynolds reiterated the importance of students being themselves. And if that means being weird, all the better.

“Somebody called me weird once when I was a kid,” Reynolds said. “And do you know what I said? I said, ‘Thank you. I’m very proud of being weird.’”

Each of the students wrote their favorite “Be You!” personal quality about themselves and a question to ask the author. Each student was numbered 1-59 and numbers were drawn randomly to select who would get a chance to speak with the author and ask him a question during an allotted question and answer period.

At the end of the visit, Reynolds asked students to share their creativity with him by sending him pictures and letters through the mail. And he said to share that creativity with individuals around them by mailing other people too. And he said that if students wanted to hang out with him some more, they can do it through his books.

“If you want to hang out with me some more,” the author said. “Just find a book with my name on it, open it up, and start reading.”

