

STORYTELLING EVENING WITH JIM MAY

Prairie Elementary School
Naperville, Illinois

The Parent Involvement Team at Prairie Elementary School wanted to plan an event for families that would be a break from TV and other outside commitments. Storytelling has been around for many years and has been credited with motivating children to read and enhancing literacy. Many Prairie Elementary School families had heard Jim May at storytelling festivals, and offered rave reviews. As an Emmy award-winning storyteller, teacher, and author, Mr. May has told stories for fifteen years to people of all ages across the United States, and in Canada and Europe. The Parent Involvement Team thought “A Storytelling Evening with Jim May” would be a good way to bring students, faculty, and their families together for an entertaining and no-cost evening.

All students, faculty, and their families were invited to attend the 1-hour event. Children could wear their favorite pajamas, and everyone was asked to bring a blanket to sit on. There also was no school scheduled for the following day.

Over 350 people gathered in the gym on their blankets to hear Jim May. Mr. May helped families “travel” to far off islands, jungles, and foreign lands. The stories were full of rich language, bits of wisdom, and plenty of humor. The audience learned how to tell a story and how to lead someone into telling a story. Thanks to Jim May, many parents probably had to confess the story of the worst trouble they had in school when they got home later that night.

Washington Junior High School students with younger siblings at Prairie Elementary helped families get settled in the gym and helped serve refreshments. Parent volunteers provided trays of baked goods, and Book Fair parents filled many orders for Jim May’s books.

After the event, an article about the evening with Jim May was published on the Parent Involvement Page of the *Prairie Dog News*. Included in the article was information on other books by Jim May, and a web site address for those interested in more information about storytelling and the Illinois Storytelling Festival. The article also thanked all the students and parents who volunteered their time and effort for “A Storytelling Evening with Jim May.”

Jacky Rowberg, Parent Chairman
(630) 420-6348