
READ ACROSS AMERICA CELEBRATION

Bouquet Canyon Elementary School

Saugus, California

Even the Grinch was grinning during the Read Across America Celebration that was held last March as part of a nationwide literacy campaign to commemorate the birthday of the late Dr. Seuss and to inspire families to read together. Our school scheduled a variety of reading events over a week's time, both in the evening and during the day, which featured a Family Reading Night, a student writing contest, and "Cat in the Hat" Assemblies. Students had the opportunity to purchase Dr. Seuss t-shirts prior to the events; and newsletters, fliers, and rhyming announcements kept parents informed of details. One of our parents who is a set designer created a wonderful background and several props that helped to transform Bouquet Canyon School into our own Seussville, U.S.A.

The Family Reading Night offered several activities for families to participate in as they visited stations set up around the school. Both teachers and parents creatively read and acted out stories, and directed art-related projects for families to share. A representative from our local Borders Bookstore provided a book display, numerous prizes, and also read stories. The evening culminated with everyone sharing a Dr. Seuss birthday cake. Many families attended, as well as over half of our teaching staff.

Students had the opportunity to participate in a writing contest organized into grade-level groups. All those entering received a certificate and bookmark. Student work made for a wonderful display. Winners shared and read their work at each of our assemblies. Local bookstores donated gift certificates that we used as prizes.

The highlight of the week was our "Cat in the Hat" Assemblies. Principal Evie Gustafson wore the full Cat in the Hat costume and teachers and students wore stovepipe hats and t-shirts. Celebrity (actor Anthony Tyler Quinn) and guest readers from the community shared their favorite story while the Cat interacted and entertained the audience. Many parents and younger siblings attended and took part in all the fun.

Written evaluations were provided for each activity. Verbal comments continue to reflect the enthusiasm that these events generated. Families appreciated having both day and evening events from which to choose, and some attended both. Our local newspaper provided coverage with several photos and a summary. Our Action Team was extremely pleased with the results in all areas and felt that we fully and creatively used the resources available to us within the school and the community to involve families in their children's reading.

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