11-21-2008

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Children use imaginations at the CPA

University Park, IL, November 21, 2008 – The children from Taft Elementary School in Kankakee, Illinois, had a very special treat on Friday when they visited the Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University. Not only did they get to see a live musical performance of one of their favorite stories, they also had a special meeting with the author, Mary Pope Osborne.

More than 100 kindergarten through third graders from the Kankakee visual arts magnet school enjoyed the stage production of "Magic Tree House: the Musical" because of the generosity of Osborne and her husband Will, who is also one of the creators of the show.

When Osborne learned that the children wanted to attend the performance but could not afford the combined ticket and bus expense, she offered to pay for their tickets. “We want every child to experience live theater. They use their imaginations when they read my books and when they see the show. This is a very active show. They must picture it in their minds as well as see it on stage.”

According to Taft second grade teacher Priscilla Dwyer, “The kids love reading the Magic Tree House books. Mrs. Osborne’s donation made it possible for them to see the show. For some of our students, it will be the first live performance they have seen on stage.”

The children from Taft loved the show, especially the dinosaurs and the dancing. Comments ranged from “Wow,” to “Can we see it again?” Many planned to read more of the Magic Tree House books.

During her pre-performance conversation with the children, Osborne asked them to vote on the setting of her next storyline. The children choose from a variety of suggestions including playing with baby pandas in China to scoring the winning goal in the World Cup of Soccer. In the end, they overwhelmingly voted for a leap year with Leprechauns and Osborne promised to write a book featuring their choice.

In her comments, Osborne also encouraged the children to continue to read and use their imaginations. “Put down the computer games and turn off the television. Act out what is in your imaginations and have fun.”

"Magic Tree House: The Musical" will continue for three more shows, November 22, at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., and November 23, at 2 p.m. Tickets are still available. For more information, call (708) 235-2222 or visit www.centertickets.net.

The Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University is located at 1 University Parkway, University Park, Illinois.