



# Hood River News

## KALEIDOSCOPE

Wednesday, March 14, 2012 **B1**

## Students thrive with *Arts in Education*

### Hands-on learning inspires young minds

In a project entitled “Welcome Back Old Friend,” Columbia Gorge Arts in Education paired a visual artist, a musician and two writers with students from three local schools for a collaboration inspired by the recent closure and re-opening of Hood River County libraries. Through four different processes, students explored the concept of what it’s like to lose someone or something special, and then be lucky enough to welcome it back.

Working with Cascade Locks elementary school students, musician Josh Kingsley explored the role music has in welcoming people back in different contexts. Kingsley used the simple tools of buckets and drumsticks to compose simple pieces the group could learn and perform together.

At Hood River Middle School, artist Abigail Merickel used her extensive visual arts background to teach eighth-graders how to make special block-printed books.

Students carved pictures out of special rubber blocks, which were rubbed with ink and used to stamp out a story of pictures on paper.

At Wy’east Middle School, writers Leigh Hancock and Adam Lapierre worked with two eighth-grade classes to express the theme of the project through words. Hancock’s class focused on poetry, while Lapierre’s class worked with prose to tell personal stories about losing and being reunited with a close friend.

After five sessions together, the artists and students met for a small party at the Hood River library, where students had the chance to show off their work and see what other classes had created.

The project was made possible by a grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust and is the latest in a very long list of artist-in-residency facilitated by CGAE. The non-profit is based out of Hood River but serves dozens of schools in Hood River, Wasco, Sherman and Klickitat counties.

CGAE works under the simple but challenging mission of enhancing every child’s education through arts in schools. The organization has facilitated hundreds of similar projects over its 25 years of serving local schools, ranging in scope from creative writing, painting, pottery, Taiko drumming, dance and theatre to entire art weeks in which schools halt their regular schedules and focus on an array of hands-on art projects.



The theme “Welcome Back Old Friend” was expressed in a variety of ways. These three examples of final pieces are from Wy’east Middle School eighth-graders. Joanna Endow (right) worked with writer (and Hood River News reporter) Adam Lapierre on a true story from her past. Below, Jesus Garcia and Alex Ortiz worked with writer Leigh Hancock on their poems.

Above are images from Hood River Middle School and Cascade Locks, which featured artists-in-residence who used visual arts and music to interpret the theme of the project. One piece is from a student’s in-progress block-print book, which shows a journey from sadness to happiness in stamps the student carved by hand. The other photograph shows Cascade Locks students performing at a celebration for the project at the Hood River County Library.

Story and photos by Adam Lapierre

## Welcome Back, Old Friend

### By Joanna Endow



Everyone has a friend they won’t ever forget about. My friend’s name is Addie. We were more than just friends, we were basically sisters.

I was born in the country of China. Where I was born, families were only allowed to have one child. My birth parents had the heart not to drown me in a bucket of water, but they did abandon me. I can’t remember my childhood like most kids, it’s very choppy. I know I had two best friends. One was Addie and the other was Jagger. In the orphanage, Addie and I made up a dance. We called it the mushroom dance. Now that I think back to it, it seems like the weirdest dance ever. Also at the orphanage, Jagger, Addie and I would laugh and “catch stars,” only to find out they were fireflies.

I can’t even start to describe how it felt to have a friend like Addie, and I know your probably thinking, “Well it’s just a friend.” That’s where your wrong.

To not know who your birth parents are and to not know who you even are is what I have to live with. Addie accepted me as a friend and she cared about me. I think destiny made me go through hard times at the beginning of my life, but then I was rewarded with Addie’s friendship, and that is worth more than anything in the world.

I remember the day the ladies at the orphanage told me I was getting adopted. I thought it was a joke because most of the people adopting wanted kids without a messed up face like mine.

I remember getting my first name from one of the ladies at the orphanage. She named me Mari Qin. Kathy, the lady that worked for the adoption agency would check on me every day and make sure I was gaining weight.

I remember telling Addie I was getting adopted. I’ll never forget the look of her expression. She looked broken. We spent every moment we could together. But time flies when you’re having fun, as our time flew by. The day I was getting adopted I was horrified. Questions raced through my mind. What if they give me back? What are they like? Kathy took pictures of the other kids with me and then I was on my way to meet my new parents. When I stepped out of the orphanages perimeter, I felt like I was breaking. I felt like I was betraying Addie by leaving her. My new family, Denise, Terry and Sydney Endow were all very nice people. But I missed Addie’s laughs and her smiles.

My mom Denise told me one day that Addie had gotten adopted a few months after I had gotten adopted. My new life was being built, but I still yearned for my life at the orphanage.

My mom and Addie’s mom emailed each other and decided that Addie and I needed to see each other again. I think it was the summer of 2006 that my family went to Boston to meet Addie and her family. I was kind of cranky because of the humid air. Addie and I connected right away, though. Seeing Addie brightened my days and brought a smile to my face. Addie and I went on a boat ride and we sat next to each other during breakfast, lunch and dinner. Our friendship picked up from where it left off.

I wanted to say, “Welcome back to being my friend,” but I didn’t want her to think we had stopped being friends. In my mind I said, “Welcome back, old friend.” The day I left to go back home was really sad, because I felt like I had just gotten something back that I cared about and once again it was taken away from me.

Addie and I will be friends until the day we die. Now I look back and see what friendship is like, and I know that no matter how many miles are between you and your friend, friendships are meant to last forever.

They will never fade.



Photo by Adam Lapierre

**JOANNA ENDOW** reads a short story she wrote during a Feb. 30 celebration at the Hood River County Library. “I was a little nervous, but not much; it was fun,” Endow said of the experience. In purple shirts are students from Cascade Locks, who also sang several songs and performed percussion versions of their project on 10-gallon plastic buckets with musician Josh Kingsley.

## My Biggest Loss

### By Jesus Garcia

I never thought that my dog would come back as a hamster. But if he did, I knew we would have a lot of catching up to do. It is strange that my newest pet is really my oldest friend. My dog loved to roam the yard and eat leftover pizza. He followed me when I went to the marina. The last time I saw him was in the afternoon. Now my hamster chases my finger as if it was I running, as if if I was reunited with my old friend.



## The Field

### By Alexis Ortiz

When I see the field it makes me think of my future. The green makes me forget everything except soccer. I get excited and I feel free. When I see the field, I don’t care about anything else. When I get the ball, I know no one can stop me from running or scoring a goal. When I don’t see the field, I feel like a fish with no water. When snow covers the field, I miss the goalie box. I miss the referee blowing his whistle. When the field comes back really green, I’m anxious to run free again. I fly like a bird. I take a pass in the corner of the box, shoot, then kiss the field because it came back.

