

SELECTED NEWS STORY

September 10, 2007

Children's Author Engages BCES Students in a Timely Story

"What an unbelievable opportunity," said Benjamin Cosor Elementary School Assistant Principal Catherine Tavormina. Recently published children's author Yvonne David was in Mountaindale and wanted to come and speak with the children and staff about her new book, "Out of the Apple Orchard," winner of an Independent Publisher Honorable Mention for 2006.



Catherine Tavormina, Yvonne David and Barbara Schmitt.

Within hours, Ms. David stood in front of several hundred eager fourth graders in the school's cafeteria/auditorium. She introduced the story of a Jewish immigrant family that escaped the congestion of the Lower East Side tenements in early twentieth century New York City to settle in the Catskills where the ailing father and family could breathe the clean mountain air. The story revolves around young Adam who steals a few apples from an orchard so his grandmother can bake a layer cake for Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. He learns the errors of his ways and finds redemption from the wisdom of his family and heritage. It is a very timely tale as the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur approach.

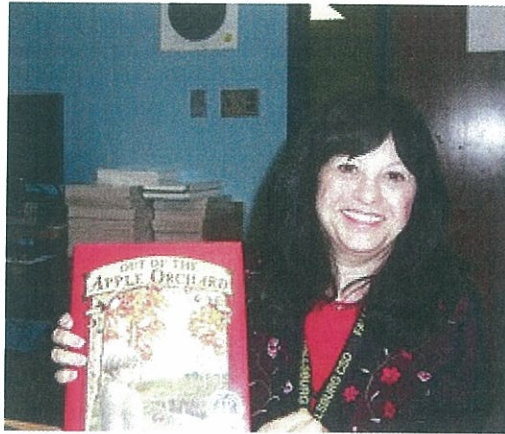
Ms. David told the students about her writing process, and how her son's Bar Mitzvah teacher asked her to write a book about the High Holidays when she found out that she was a writer. The author came up with an image of a young boy in an oversized cap sitting on a stone fence while she was quietly at rest at 1:00 AM in the morning. This became Adam. Her research for the book brought her to the Catskills where she met Phil Brown, Sociology Professor at Brown University, who is an authority on Catskill culture. He introduced her to local historian John Conway. Conway suggested that she place the setting of the book in Mountaindale and introduced her to Barb and Ken Schmitt, who have been restoring the hamlet and understand its long history.

In the morning program and in a special visit to Ms. Jenny Silverman's sixth grade class on writing, Ms. David encouraged the children to write their stories and not worry about the process. Some teachers spoke to her about "the sloppy copy" or the very rough first draft that everyone starts out with. Ms. David used an old saying that she thinks about when she writes, "Apply the seat of your pants to the seat of the chair" and you will develop the discipline you need to write and do most all things in life. One of the messages in her book is that with discipline and applying yourself it is possible to fulfill your dreams much like many immigrants have done when they come to America. She urged the youngsters to stretch themselves just as she and her sister Lyn Rodden had with this book. As an artist, Lyn thought she could only do black and white drawings such as the ones that depict the events in "Out of the Orchard." Yet she created a magnificent oil painting in bright colors that became the book's cover.

In answering many questions from the interested students, Ms. David explained that writing the book has required a lot of time and patience. This book is the first of a series of four that will examine the book's family during different generations. She is researching the second book that takes place in 1938, with Adam as a father. If anyone wants to contact the author with stories of Mountaindale in the 1930's, please e-mail her at outoftheappleorchard@earthlink.net. Ms. David wanted to emphasize that a portion of the proceeds from the book will benefit Jewish Family Services—a United Way agency helping nondenominational families in need—and the Mountaindale

Redevelopment Program. The book is available locally at Mountaindale Community Redevelopment Project at (845) 434-4747.

In the book Ms. David describes the tradition of dipping apples in honey to symbolize the bounty and sweetness of the New Year. Her visit to Benjamin Cosor Elementary School was a sweet way to begin the new school year, and the children will reap great benefits.



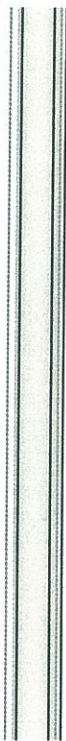
Yvonne David with her award-winning book.

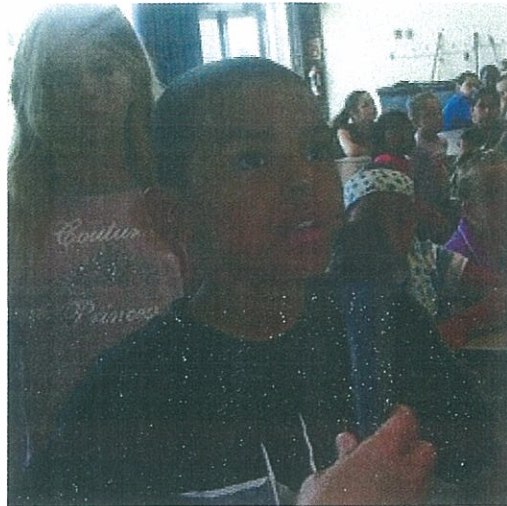


It was a pleasure to be with you.



Thank you for being with us.





I have a really deep question.



Some of Ms. Silverman's students.



My question requires two hands to hold the microphone.

 EMAIL THIS STORY