

Six Nations Elder George Beaver leaves his comments at the Aboriginal content Poster Session at Super Conference 2011.

Photo by: Padma Sastri



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Thornwood Public School is, like Floradale, a multicultural, multilingual school community, a community in which diversity is celebrated. At Thornwood, embracing parental involvement in the development of multilingual literacy skills and using diversity as a resource have resulted in students experiencing greater academic success while broadening their global awareness and appreciation for different cultures. One of our many initiatives that serve to celebrate the impressive linguistic achievements of Thornwood's students was an end-of-the year multilingual storytelling morning by a parent in the community, two Thornwood teachers, and a professional poet who volunteered to contribute to our event. It was an especially proud moment for six year old Farwaz, as he filed into the grade one pod, proudly stepped out of line, and joined his nervous mother in front of a quarter of the school population. He and his family had toiled over the nearly life-size cardboard animals and listened to their mother rehearse the telling of "It's Mine" by Rod Campbell. She was an intuitively masterful, interactive storyteller. Non-Arabic speaking

students listened attentively and watched intently to glean the gist of the story as his mother told her tale and Farwaz led them in repeating key Arabic phrases. English-speaking students gained a deeper appreciation of the challenges English Language Learners face at school. Arabic students were proud to have their teachers and friends hear their language showcased and to act as the experts in the room, confidently answering whispered questions from nearby classmates.

Another Thornwood initiative is the publishing of dual language books, which are shared on the school website at: thornwoodps.dyndns.org/dual/index.htm. Our experience at Thornwood mirrors that of Floradale; we find that these identity texts help to engage the students and parents of Thornwood's multilingual community and engender a sense of pride.

We hope sharing our positive experiences will inspire you to develop creative, cross-curricular approaches to nurturing respectful, responsible, global citizens. Our students are the leaders of tomorrow. Will our future be in good hands? ■

References

Manners et al. (2010, Summer). The Circle of Light: Exploring Aboriginal Education in Highly Diverse Schools. *The Register* [online]. Retrieved 3 March, 2011, from <http://www.principals.ca/documents/Register_Summer_Vol12_No2.pdf>



Six Nations Elder George Beaver with Padma Sastri at the Aboriginal content Poster Session at Super Conference 2011.

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