

AUTHOR VISIT REPORT

Within 2 weeks of your author event, please send us the following information:

- 1) Name of School _____ Denison Montessori _____
- 2) Name of author _____ Mary Peace Finley _____
- 3) Date(s) of visit _____ November 5, 2009 _____
- 4) What grade levels participated in the event? _____ PreK-6 _____
- 5) What is the total number of students that participated in the event? _____ 232 _____
- 6) Provide us with a brief description of the event (a paragraph is sufficient.)

Mary Peace Finley's unique ability to blend fiction with factual Colorado history to stir students' imaginations and sense of wonder made her visit to Denison Montessori more successful than I had anticipated. Students were not only captivated about the real Colorado events that happened in and around Bent's Fort, but they were also engrossed in Ms. Finley's enthusiastic reading about giant grizzlies, dauntless hunters, courageous Indians, and the day-to-day life in a frontier trading post.

Ms. Finley brought just the right amount artifacts for students to touch, hear, and try on. But more importantly, her honest and thoughtful answers on an author's musings and planning let students know that their craft as burgeoning writers was as authentic as hers.

- 7) Please evaluate the response to this visit.

Ms. Finley's visit has inspired a heightened level of inquiry in the LMC. Over the past week, younger students have come throughout the day asking for books and websites to answer questions about tipis and wikiups, and how to make adobe. Older students are more interested in the juxtaposition of the many cultures throughout Colorado. Students *and* teachers were enthralled with the slide show of Mary's taking part in a Bent's Fort re-enactment. They came away with an appreciation of the need to gain background information as a prelude to writing.

The enthusiasm of the Author Visit was carried back to the classroom. Teachers drew their students' attention to how Ms. Finley's word choice constituted a "hook," and how her deft use of language and nuance created crisp, visual images. Two upper elementary teachers checked out multiple copies of Soaring Eagle and White Grizzly for small literature groups starting this week. Several more had students clamoring to finish Little Fox's Secret to find out if Gray Wolf's vision at Bent's Fort would come to fruition. Another teacher and I are encouraging students to research, plan, and implement a Montessori "Going Out" to Bent's Fort.

An unexpected outcome of this visit was the showcasing of new technology for our school. Ms. Finley used the document camera on loan from DoTs to show the illustrations while reading from one of her earlier books, Tiger Tales (“the thing ‘hind the animal”), for our kindergarten children.

Everyone at Denison Montessori can hardly wait for Ms. Finley’s new book to be unveiled at this year’s CCIRA conference. We hope she will take our counsel on the title.

8) Please send photographs of the event (optional).



If you have any questions about this form, please contact Alisa Antony (720) 423-8125. You may fax this form to: Alisa Antony, ERS, (720) 423-8100 or send via school mail: ERS, Fox St, Alisa Antony.