



BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Bonita Unified Elementary Students' Creative Stories Come Alive via The Imagination Machine

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – Oak Mesa Elementary School students saw their creativity take center stage during a campus visit by The Imagination Machine, which transformed student-written stories into lively performances that blended humor and the fundamentals of storytelling.

Students gathered with anticipation in March as their classmates' stories were introduced across three assembly sessions. This year, actors clad in paint splattered overalls brought seven stories written by Oak Mesa students to life through colorful costumes, music and playful stagecraft. Over the school day, stories such as the mysterious "Ghost of Oak Mesa" and the heroic "Super Friends" were transformed into lively theatrical scenes.

"The Imagination Machine has played a role in fostering enthusiasm for writing," Oak Mesa Elementary Principal Dr. Christine Malally said. "This adds value for students. It shows them that writing isn't just something they're required to do every day in class, they can be creative and use their imagination. Having our parents and families there to support them helps build that sense of community as well."

Many stories were written collaboratively by students, working together to develop plots before submitting their ideas earlier in the semester. During the assembly, performers introduced each piece by highlighting key elements of storytelling, including setting, protagonists, antagonists, themes, conflict and resolution, helping students visualize how those components work together in a narrative structure.

At the conclusion of the show, the Imagination Machine crew reminded students that great things can happen when they put their ideas to paper. Student authors whose stories were selected for performance were recognized with Certificates of Writing Achievement.

The Imagination Machine, founded in 1981, performs student-written stories at schools across California to inspire creative writing. Each year, the program visits roughly 500 schools, selecting student submissions from each grade level and transforming them into productions designed to foster creativity while helping students develop confidence as writers.

"Experiences like this show students that writing and creativity play an important role in their education," Bonita Unified Superintendent Matt Wien said. "By celebrating student storytelling, we help foster a culture where artistic expression and imagination go hand in hand."

MORE



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PHOTOS

BUSD_OAKMESA_IMAGINATION1: Oak Mesa Elementary school authors are presented with Certificates of Writing Achievement by The Imagination Machine team during an assembly in March.

BUSD_OAKMESA_IMAGINATION2: Oak Mesa Elementary students laugh and smile as The Imagination Machine assembly brings their peers' stories to life during an engaging assembly.

BUSD_OAKMESA_IMAGINATION3: Rooted in theater, The Imagination Machine brings student stories to life while familiarizing students with aspects of narrative structure, such as setting, protagonists, antagonists, themes, conflict and resolution.

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