

Ready For The Stage



Marlon Carey, ambassador for Shakespeare to Hip Hop, in Tara D'Aleno's third grade class at Tiogue Elementary yesterday as part of a week-long language and poetry experience. Carey and Regie Gibson visited the school last year, and came back to host in-class writing workshops and lessons in public speaking.

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COVENTRY—Because of the success of last year's Shakespeare to Hip Hop event, students and faculty at Tiogue Elementary School once again welcomed a trio of educators to their school for a week-long language and poetry experience.

This collaborative performance poetry was started by Regie Gibson and Marlon Carey.

Both men are poets, scholars, musicians, mentors and educators who travel to schools across New England and teach students about poetry and the English language.

Last year was the first time the men visited Coventry after members of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) contacted them.

They used their knowledge to host in-class writing workshops for grades K-5 and on Friday, grades three through five were planning to use what they learned to show

off their poems in the form of hip hop during a school presentation.

To help Gibson and Carey teach all the grades in a week, Ryk McIntyre, another poet, joined the crew at Tiogue and coached students in the art of the Spoken Word.

Carey taught a workshop on Thursday morning to Tara D'Aleno's third grade class on how to properly perform poetry in front of an audience.

See STAGE, Page A-3



Jessica Boisclair/Daily Times

Tiogue Elementary School third-grader John Lovell reads a twisted fairy tale to his classmates yesterday as part of the school's week-long "Shakespeare to Hip Hop" presentation.

Stage appearance will test students' courage

Continued from Page A-1

He had previously visited the students in D'Aleno's class on Tuesday, where he helped them understand the concepts of alliteration, poetry, creativity and the history of the English language.

During this time, he had the students create a "Twisted Fairytale;" a story that took pieces of various fairytales and made it into one.

Because five students from the third grade class will be presenting their stories in front of an audience, Carey taught them six tricks to become good public speakers.

He explained to the class that once they are front of people they must learn how to "ground" themselves by standing still, feet together, breathing deeply.

Once they have done that, they should make eye contact with their audience.

"It's important because when human beings communicate they exchange unseen information just from the eye," he said. "The more I look at you in the eye the more I can understand your emotion."

He explained to the students that they must speak clearly, enunciate, exaggerate and articulate their words.

While doing this, they must also make sure they are not speaking in a monotone voice or reading too quickly.

Carey told the students to use gestures and finally "land the plane."

"Try to land the plane but if you're on stage and you're feeling like, 'oh my god all the words are jumbling,' take a deep breath and the audience will be trying to help you because nobody wants you to fail," he added.

At the end of the workshop Carey invited the students up for an open mic session so the students could practice reading their fairytales in front of people.

Prior to this however, he had the students work out their brains and muscles to warm themselves up. Students yelled out "the lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue" in order to get their mouths used to the words.

Many of the students bravely stood in front of the class and read off their stories, which ranged from twisted stories about Jack and the Bean Stalk taking over Cinderella's castle to the three little pigs eating hot dogs.

D'Aleno explained that Carey came into her class last year as well and she is tremendously impressed with the way he teaches.

"I think this is nice for the students to see different people and ways to present. I could teach poetry or mixed up tales but he brings such an unbelievable talent to what he's doing," she added. "He has animation; the rhyme. He has that love for the poetry. So it's great to see different ways to present the material."