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Words of wisdom

Young authors get guidance from a pro

By SHANNON MURPHY
Times Herald

Clutching hand-written books close to them, students in first through fifth grade listened closely to words of wisdom from author and illustrator Warren Hanson.

Hanson of St. Paul, Minn., spoke to the young authors Saturday during the 10th Annual Young Author's Conference at the St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency in Marysville. The event was sponsored by the Blue Water Reading Council.

Hanson has written and illustrated dozens of books, including the Peef series, which is about a cuddly teddy bear, and *Grandpa has a Great Big Face*.

During the conference, Hanson gave students tips about writing and answered questions.

"I love what I do every day," he said. "My job is making stuff up, and that's a pretty good job for a grown-up to have."

Students asked questions such as what tools Hanson uses to write, where his ideas come from and how he gets paid.

"There are ideas (fluttering) all over," Hanson said, answering a question about how he gets ideas for books. "They're in this room. You can't see them, but they're there. I've taught myself to catch them."

Hanson described how authors and illustrators split 10% of each book sale, making it hard to make a living by just writing. He also delighted students by making an original drawing of items they suggested, including a flower, butterfly, leopard and Peef the teddy bear.

Alina Devoogd, 8, a second-grader at Algonac Elementary School, is constantly writing. So when the chance to learn from Hanson presented itself, Alina's mother, Michele Devoogd, signed her up right away.



LINED UP: Keewahdin Elementary School second-grader Elijah Samuel, 8, of Fort Gratiot, center, waits with his mother, Nalini, for an autograph after Garfield Elementary School fourth-grader Megan Strachan gets hers Saturday during the 10th annual Young Authors Conference held at the St. Clair County RESA TEC building.



PUBLISHED: Keewahdin Elementary School third-grader Collin Nicaise, 8, reads from his book, *My Life as a Cub Scout*, Saturday during the 10th annual Young Authors Conference held at the St. Clair County RESA TEC building.

"We have scraps of paper all over our house," Michele Devoogd said. "She writes on everything available. This is something she loves."

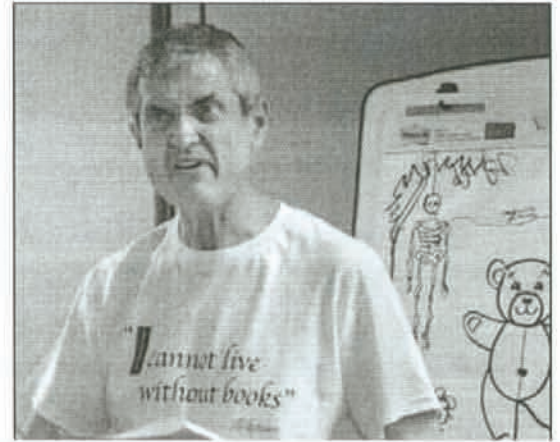
Alina said she wants to illustrate her books and enjoyed watching Hanson draw.

"I wrote a non-fiction book about the cheetah, and I've written about things I've done in my life," Alina said.

Kenzie Weingartz, 8, and her brother Keaton, 9, both students at Morton Elementary School in Marysville, also enjoy writing. Kenzie brought a story she had written about a puppy to the conference, and Keaton brought his story about BMX bike racing.

"I think it was kind of cool to see an actual author," Kenzie said.

Contact Shannon Murphy at (810) 989-6258 or semurphy@gannett.com.



EXPERIENCE: Author/illustrator Warren Hanson gives a spirited talk to students Saturday during the 10th annual Young Authors Conference held at the St. Clair County RESA TEC building.