

MUNSEY PARK SCHOOL
COMMUNITY READ – OCTOBER 2014

“Most powerful is he who has himself in his own power.”
Seneca (Roman Philosopher)

Dear Munsey Park Families,

This month, our selection for the *Community Read*, Nothing Ever Happens on 90th Street by Roni Shotter, is very special in several ways. At the beginning of the year, teachers introduce the Writer’s Workshop and Writer’s Notebook to the students. This humorous story about Eva, a would-be writer trying to complete a homework assignment, will help students understand how writers get their ideas. A hilarious sequence of events ensues and Eva learns that you can find inspiration for writing anywhere if you observe carefully enough.

Nothing Ever Happens on 90th Street also provides an opportunity for students to continue their journey of self-knowledge. Children may explore the idea that while growing up, we all have experiences that help us learn more about ourselves. Writer’s write about what they know best: themselves, their families and friends, and their environment. Sometimes writers get ideas for stories just by remembering true things that happen to them.

Teachers support youngsters’ increased ability to write narrative, expository, informational, poetic and procedural writing at each grade level with increasing sophistication and decreasing reliance on scaffolds. Between kindergarten and sixth grade, our students become progressively more capable of writing both narrative and expository texts. Our younger readers and writers will write “small moment stories” by recalling an event and retelling it. Older students do similar work at a more advanced level when they create, revise, consider and reconsider their work by asking questions like, “What is at the heart of my story?” Stories will include two or more small moments and students learn to revise, checking for strong beginnings/endings and sentences that relate to what their writing is *really* about. They highlight issues in the world, making statements about what matters.

Therefore, as a family, you may want to focus on the importance of learning and self-discovery. Below are some other topics you might wish to explore with your child:

- **Neighborhood/Community:** What is the difference between a neighborhood and a community? Is 90th Street a neighborhood or a community at the start of the story? At the end? In what ways? What is the result of everyone's new relationship at the end of the story? This story is set in an urban environment. Is a story like this one possible in the suburbs, or in the country? How would it be different? How would it be the same?
- **Imagination/The Role of the Writer or Artist:** What does one need to do in order to write a good story? Is imagining important? Is thinking important? Is looking and listening important? What does Eva do to get ideas? What do the neighbors advise her to do? What part of this story really happens? What part happens in Eva's imagination? All of it? Some of it? None of it? Is there one correct answer to this question?

Other books that will inspire your child to write:

A Writer's Notebook: Unlocking the Writer Within You by Ralph Fletcher

Live Writing: Breathing Life into Your Words by Ralph Fletcher

Amelia's Notebook (Amelia) by Marissa Moss

Warmest regards,

Jean C. Kendall, Ed.D.
Principal