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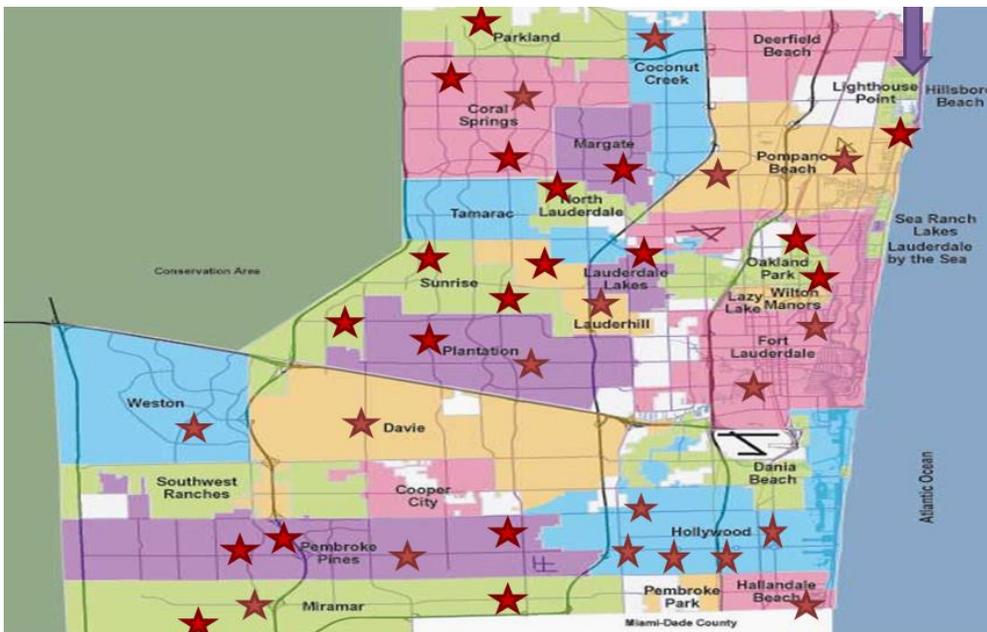
May 16, 2014

By Phyllis J. Neuberger, Pelican staff

The Doreen Gauthier Lighthouse Point Library Takes Top Spot in Florida for Virtual Global Story Time

“Just imagine the excitement we all feel about our small town, independent library going up against Florida’s big libraries to win the 2014 Library Innovation Award,” says Christy Keyes who accepted the award on May 7th in Orlando at the Florida Library Association’s Annual Conference. Ten libraries in the State of Florida were nominated for this award, and this small city library took the prize.

Director of the Doreen Gauthier Lighthouse Point Library, Keyes modestly credits her library for winning the award, but she is the pivotal reason this high honor was paid to this library. Partnering with Broward Public Schools, Keyes uses technologies to present her program, *Virtual Global Story Time: Travel The World Through Stories*, to under-served populations in the five to eight year old range.



In the past two years, Keyes has shared story time with over 2,800 students at 38 Broward Public Schools. The library has hosted twelve Virtual Global Story Times for kindergarten through second grade students in Broward Public Schools through BECON (Broward Education Communications Network). Each program has both interactive and view-only options. The interactive schools speak directly with Keyes and the view-only schools do not. Keyes provides all schools with Q&A directions for the teachers

to follow with their students. The selection of which schools are interactive is handled by BECON.

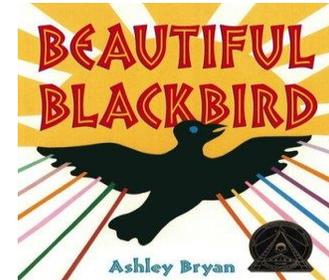


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Although the stories chosen are for all K-2 students, the program targets ‘at-risk’ students who may have never set foot in a library. To introduce children to stories and cultures around the world, each story time has a spotlight culture and book. For example, the story time *The Magic of Wings: Birds, Butterflies, and Bumble Bees* spotlights Zambia, Africa. The global book is *Beautiful Blackbird* by Ashley Bryan.



During Keyes’ presentation, questions about the story and the illustrations are asked by students from participating schools who are chosen by their teacher to dialogue with Miss Christy. She says, “I am often floored by the fascinating observations and questions directed to me.” She adds, “Student handouts for post program enrichments are available on our website. Thanks to the Friends of the Library Youth Fund, teachers who complete a feedback form receive a classroom copy of a book presented.”



Keyes says, “I started writing the global story time while I was a library and information science graduate student at the University of South Florida. I was lucky to have Dr. Henrietta Smith as my mentor who taught me the importance of making sure children see a little bit of themselves in each program by including multicultural stories with global themes, even as they are introduced to new things such as world cultures, music, art, and dance.”

To enter this statewide competition, Keyes prepared a carefully detailed and articulated presentation of her innovative Global Story Time program. Those long hours spent in preparation with hopes of being nominated for the award turned out to be well spent when the Doreen Gauthier Lighthouse Point Library was chosen the winner.

In keeping with the community’s love of its library and its high quality reputation, Keyes has incorporated a new dimension as she takes story time into the new high tech world of interactive education. “It’s another service this library is proud to offer our community,” Keyes says, beaming with pleasure at the recognition this award has given to the library. “It’s another option for stimulating the love of the book.”

Thank you Christy Keyes for serving your community with your best work.

Photos by BECON and The Lighthouse Point Library.

- Photo 1: FLA Executive Director Martina Brawer; FLA President, Gladys Roberts; Lighthouse Point Library Director Christy Keyes.
- Photo 2: Map of Broward County. Red stars mark the location of each school that participated. The library marked by purple arrow.
- Photo 3: Christy Keyes presenting the Virtual Global Story Time to seven schools via BECON and distance learning equipment.