

January 2007

Re: Baxter Graham's visit
Woodland Elementary

On January 15th, 2007 author Baxter Graham visited Woodland Elementary. It is part of the Puyallup School District in Washington State. He was there with his father, Robert Graham, the entire school day, from 8:25am to 2:45pm. I had the pleasure of escorting both around for the day. During the day I had the honor of watching Baxter present to Kindergarten through 6th grades.

Our staff was very excited to have such a young author come and present to our student body. Our student body was very excited about writing stories after hearing directly from Baxter. I cannot tell you how many students have since stopped me and begin telling me about the stories they are writing!

Our committee wanted to get as many students exposed to Baxter and his Old King Stinky Toes story. We wanted our students to realize that you don't have to be 'old' to be an author. We wanted our students to be excited about writing. We wanted Baxter to explain the process and how he wrote the story. Our goals were clearly met! We had numerous students who ordered Old King Stinky Toes, who are writing more, who share their writing with others, and that they realize that everyone is capable of being an author!

Baxter's day was quite full. We divided the school day into hour sections (we did allow him 1 full hour for lunch, but the rest of the day he was talking to classes :). In each section, there were at least two and sometimes three classes placed together. He changed each of his presentations to meet the needs/ages of the audience. He did this flawlessly. I was quite impressed with how well he handled each audience and how his prepared speech was changed each time. He was quite mature with his presentations. The difference between talking to the primary classes and his talking to the intermediate classes was noticeable. As an experienced educator, I expect to see modifications from other educators/adults but not teenagers. Baxter impressed me.

Baxter was a delight to have present at our school. His personality and style easily won the student body's respect. I would recommend him come speak at other schools, too.

Please feel free to contact me further.

Michele Jangula, M.Ed.
Puyallup School District #3
Woodland Elementary
7707 112th St. E.
Puyallup, WA 98387
(253) 841-8747
janguleme@puyallup.k12.wa.us.