

Winter 2023 “FUN” raiser Newsletter

Welcome to crisp weather and snuggly blankets time of year! If you are not aware of Lil' Miss Story Hour's mission and background, we are a grass roots Colorado Springs, Colorado-based donation-run educational organization, providing literacy themed programming and entertainment for children. It was founded in 2019 by Vanessa Little, a long-time Colorado resident and educator with more than 30 years of experience teaching infant through college-aged individuals in the Colorado, Washington DC, Virginia, and Maryland areas. Lil' Miss Story Hour hosts monthly community story times that present a diverse range of children's literature, written and illustrated by remarkable authors and illustrators from diverse communities.

Because Lil' Miss Story Hour saw that in Colorado Springs specifically, there was a need for more representation and inclusion in children's literacy and Arts focused events, our focus is to expose children to books written and illustrated by a wide range of individuals, especially those from underrepresented communities, individuals with disabilities, military individuals, specifically women, and individuals from LGBTQIA communities. Every day that this program lives on, we hope that showcasing diverse books will encourage children from diverse backgrounds to grow up, become authors, and write their own stories and the stories of people who look like them for the next generations.

Since its inception in 2019, Lil' Miss Story Hour has grown from 40-minute story sessions to a two-hour program that includes special guests and artists ranging from dancers, singers, musicians, yogis, healers, poets, authors, illustrators, visual artists, workshop presenters, educators, entrepreneurs, motivational speakers, and more, to hosting annual festivals. Because of the support of wonderful local and out of state attendees, we continue to gain momentum and recognition in Colorado Springs, as well as a handful of cities throughout the U.S. Since the last FUNraiser, we have featured artists from up and the I-25 corridor and have collaborated in Colorado Springs with KnobHill Urban Arts District, Dear Summer Fest, Southern Colorado Juneteenth Festival, CC Mobile Arts, Pikes Peak Library District's The Hall, Luxe Daiquiri Lounge, Platte Furniture, Sunday Barber CO., Ecovillage, The Hause Collective, and Manitou Congregational Church to host many successful story times and community events. These events including the 4th Annual AANHPI History Month Story Time, 4th Annual Juneteenth, Pride, & Black Music Month Story Time, 4rd Annual Hispanic/Latine Heritage Story Time, and the 2nd Annual Back to School Culture Fest, where we gave away nearly 100 backpacks to children in need in grades Pre-K-3 through 6. The remaining 150 backpacks we donated once again, to Monroe Elementary School, a District 11 school with a neighborhood with the second lowest income families in the city. This Summer, we also were excited to have been invited back for a third time to be a part of the 3rd Annual Dear Summer Fest.

This year's Back to School Culture Fest was a huge success. Lil' Miss Story Hour many organizations throughout Colorado including Platte Furniture, Blackpackers, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Elevation Wheel Company, Theatre Across Borders, Katy Williams Design, Dr. Julie Deans, and Momoxoart, to curate an interactive Kids' Corner. Kids' Corner included a chalk festival, a theatre performance, a conflict resolution workshop, a 3D printing workshop, face painting, a petting zoo, and an outdoor workshop. The entire festival had nearly 600 people in attendance and well-known faces such as our new mayor, Yemi Mobolade, state representative, Stephanie Vigil, and Colorado Springs School District 11 Board Member candidates, Shay Dabney and Darleen Daniels. Shay was our keynote speaker and Mayor Yemi also made some remarks. Djembe drummers from Jackson, Mississippi were some of our performers as well as national hip-hop duo, Kuf Knotz and Christine Elise. _____

Events such as this one and the many others mentioned above in this newsletter would not have been possible without your support during the "FUN"raisers over the past few years. Lil' Miss Story Hour and the children of Colorado Springs and the world appreciate you for making it possible to keep this programming alive! Lil' Miss Story Hour is proud to note that our program has reached neatly 2000 children as we approach our 5-year anniversary in July 2024!

Please take a moment to visit our website lilmissstoryhour.com, peruse our photo and video galleries of past events (2023 event photos have not yet been updated), check out upcoming events, or write a review!

Thank you so much for your sponsorship and support!

Sincerely,

Vanessa Little
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