

A puppet's blueprint to 'Building A Better You'

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
Friday, 28 July 2017 01:22



Octavia Fellin's kids SUMMER PROGRAM

Octavia Fellin Children's Branch presented a funny and entertaining puppet show on behalf of Rocky Mountain Puppets – "Building A Better You," as part of the Summer Reading Program.

The event was held July 22. It was sponsored by Richardson's Trading Co.

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The show was based on building up a child's character, teamwork, listening, morals, and honesty, encouraging the acronym B.U.I.L.D.:

Believe, **U**nderstand, **I**nnovation, **L**earn, **D**etermination.

A packed room of 55 kids and adults were entertained by puppets learning how to build a castle with construction tools and with lots of interaction from the audience.

The star puppet "Aiden," a green and blue dinosaur along with his puppeteer, Meghan Casey, showed the audience various construction tools used to build a castle while relating character building skills.

Casey is an awarding winning professional ventriloquist with 17 years of experience, and loves performing for all audiences of any age. Casey begins the show by helping Aiden tell the audience what proper steps must be taken to properly build a castle, such as beginning with the blue print.

"Do you know what a blueprint is Aiden?" Casey asked.

"Sure, I'm not duh, I know what a blueprint is." Aiden replied.

Roars of laughter sprung from kids sitting in the front row as Aiden produced his version of a blueprint. A paper showing his dinosaur "prints" in "blue" paint ... "blue-prints!"

Other puppets were introduced into the act, such as Schooster the Puppy; Arnold the Dragon; a Monkey who was the plumber; a Kitty who was the electrician; pieces of lumber called Woody; and a small drawing of a house that talked.

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Each of the puppets voices had its own unique personality. The summer reading program coordinators aim to get different entertainers/performers to entertain the kids on Saturdays during June and July. The New Mexico State Library gives the Children's Branch links to as which performers will be in the area, and feedback from other libraries on the performers. This was Casey's second time visiting the Children's Branch and even more entertaining this time around, according to Octavia Fellin Youth Services Manager Anne Price.

"It's always a great show and fun for the whole family, lots of laughs, lots of giggling," Price said. "A really good solid performance out of Meghan. It's a pretty full meeting room for us here at the library."

Casey started out with ventriloquism when she was 5, inspired by her father Ed Casey.

When she was small, her father would read to her using puppets, creating different voices.

One night when her father was reading to her she placed her hand on his throat and realized the voices were coming from him. This not only shocked her, but opened a whole new world to her. Casey is currently pursuing her goal of becoming a doctor and wants to use her puppets as a way of warming up to children. She does the puppeteering gig during the summer to finance her college.

"I've been doing this for the past 17 years, and I'm 22 now and I love it," Casey said. "I want to send a message to the kids, like having a solid foundation for themselves and building upon that."

Proud parent Ed Casey said he never imagined reading to his daughter would produce this outcome.

"I'm real proud of her and never thought it would go this route," Ed Casey said. "She discovered it was me doing the voices and she wanted to learn how to do it too. I enrolled her in a

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ventriloquist course and she passed it all. The next year she performed in a convention and has been doing it ever since.”

“It’s like Captain Kangaroo meets Dr. Oz – applying both that can connect with the kids, sort of like a Dr. Oz for the kids.” Casey said.

Casey comes from Denver, Colo., and has performed in Shiprock, Taos, Santa Fe, Lovington, Carlsbad, and has toured throughout New Mexico. She also performed in Wyoming and Nevada.

Parent, Anna Kozeliski, along with her children, Daminano, 8, Amadore, 6 and Faustino, 4, were both surprised and pleased with the show.

“It was even better than last year; it’s nice to have some real talent in Gallup that we usually don’t see with performing arts for the children,” Kozeliski said.

Daminano also enjoyed the show.

“I like it, I liked everything ... it was funny,” he said.

Grandparent Christine Diaz brought her 3-year-old granddaughter, Khloe Diaz, to the show and both truly got a laugh out of it.

“I thought it was wonderful ... very educational, the kids all enjoyed it,” Diaz said. “First time I came, and I was my watching (granddaughter) from behind, and she really enjoyed it,” she said. “We will come back whenever she comes back.”

Another parent, Geneva Wilson, said that this brought back childhood memories as she

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remembers shows like this when she was in elementary school.

"I really had fun and so did my daughters," Wilson said. "I remember sitting in the gymnasium at boarding school while entertainers like this performed for us, and now I'm a mom watching my daughters with the same expressions on their faces I had as a kid."

The library's "End of Summer Round-Up" takes place on July 29, 1-4 pm. Location: 200 W. Aztec Ave (behind building).

For more information on children's programs, contact the Children's Branch at (505) 726-6120. And for information on Rocky Mountain Puppets, contact (303) 469-4155. Visit website: www.rockymountainpuppets.com, or email rockymountainpuppets@gmail.com.

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