



## Young Authors winners headed to state conference

Any writer knows inspiration can be hard to find, but sometimes it rolls right past you.

That's what happened for Olson Elementary School fifth-grader Cooper Parisi who had been working on his Young Authors manuscript "A Brief Glimpse of Reality" off and on since fourth grade. Cooper's book, which was selected as a winner in the Woodstock Community Unit School District 200 Young Authors contest, chronicles the saga of a vending machine rubber ball.

"I did the main story in 4th grade for an assignment and Miss [Laura] Colangelo told us to bounce ideas off each other. I said my ideas aren't bouncing, so then I decided I needed a bouncy ball idea, and I came up with this story," Cooper said.

Ten students will represent District 200 in the May 18 Illinois Young Authors Conference in Normal. The winners from each elementary and middle school were among hundreds of District students who submitted manuscripts — 46 of which were judged earlier in March by a panel of volunteer teachers, parents and community members including Woodstock Independent Editor Larry Lough.

Cooper said he is excited and nervous about the upcoming conference and considers himself more of a writer than an artist although his book is also full of beautiful illustrations. He's spent the last year working on personification of inanimate objects and enjoys reading about Greek mythology, fantasy and science fiction.

Kristen Sauber, a District 200 literacy and technology coach, said works were judged by originality, creativity, engaging writing, grammar and structure.

"It was nice to see a variety of fiction and non-fiction this year. We even had some poetry and some books were written in Spanish," Sauber said.

Lola Lesiewicz, a second-grader at Westwood Elementary School, didn't have to leave her own kitchen to find inspiration for her winning book "The Impolite Knight."

"My brother had his knight costume at the dinner table and he was being impolite, so I said, 'You're an impolite knight,' and I decided to write a book about it," Lola said.

Jorge Ayllón, third-grader at Mary Endres Elementary School, wrote a book in English last year, but he decided to submit in Spanish this year.

"I saw a cartoon about a boy who really wanted something and had to work for it, I took that idea and wrote my own story," Jorge said. "I included several morals in my story because I wanted the readers to be interested and identify. Go work instead of playing all day in your video games."

Here's a complete list of students winners who will head to the state conference:

- Cooper Parisi, Olson Elementary School, Grade 5, "A Brief Glimpse of Reality."
- Lola Lesiewicz, Westwood Elementary, Grade 2, "The Impolite Knight."
- Jax Weston, Verda Dierzen Early Learning Center, kindergarten, "Ted Escapes."
- Jorge Ayllón, Mary Endres Elementary School, Grade 3, "El carro de mis sueños."
- Chase Weger, Prairiewood Elementary School, Grade 1, "Chase Wants Cheese."
- Jane Moore, Dean Street Elementary School. Grade 1, "Ann's Rescue."
- Brendan C. Vorderer, Greenwood Elementary School, Grade 4, "The Mansion at Craggy Woods."
- Noah Folden, Clay Academy, Grade 3, "Europe, Here We Come!"
- Joe Gerloff, Northwood Middle School, Grade 7, "Planetside."
- Sapphire Nyberg, Creekside Middle School, Grade 7, "Hunt for the Elementals."

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