

HIGH POINT STUDENT WRITERS 2017

“Be a Writer!” Summer Course

This summer, High Point’s Summer Fun Enrichment Camp proudly produced a bumper crop of talented authors-to-be from grades 4-7. Eleven students (from High Point and other area schools) attended the “Be a Writer!” course, taught by Mrs. Kathy Grayson, a member of our admin staff. Mrs. Grayson shared her 20-plus years of experience as a journalist and editor by teaching her students many authentic “tricks of the trade.”

Students learned to construct and refine multiple drafts of first-person stories, reporter accounts and interviews, and creative stories. They learned to self-edit, submit their stories for “professional” editing, decipher editing symbols and notations, and revise to final draft stage for publication.

They worked with timeline organization; the 5 W’s and 2 H’s (who-what-where-when-why-how-how much); plus inner thoughts, feelings and quotations. They learned how to interview and take abbreviated notes on a reporter pad. They practiced developing a story and then bringing it full-circle; developing effective openings, closings, and titles/headlines. They learned to search for the perfect word and use synonyms, metaphors, and analogies. They refined their grammar, spelling and sentence construction for greater clarity and readability.

Most importantly, this amazing group of eager young writers learned to give and take constructive criticism to and from their editing partners and their instructor, in order to move their writing to higher levels. *We are so proud of them!*

Herewith, their final drafts of their **first-person stories** (in alpha order by first name):

“Swimming in Hawaii”

By Benjamin Lee

5th Grade

One spring, my parents, my brothers Caleb and Nathan, my grandparents and I were boarding a morning plane. After boarding the plane, I knew that in a few hours we would be in one of the Paradise Islands in Hawaii: Honolulu. I was so excited that I was clutching my backpack to the point where it started to hurt my shoulders. After we were on board the plane, I caught myself dreaming about the rich sunsets and the clear blue oceans and beaches I would encounter. I had never been to any Hawaiian island before, so I was deeply thrilled to be there.

After being airborne for an hour or so and looking out the window, my brother Caleb asked me, “Isn’t the blue ocean amazing?”

Yes, Hyun,” I replied. (Hyun means big brother in Korean.)

Then he asked me, “What are you looking forward to in Honolulu?”

I thought for a moment, then replied, “The beaches and the blue ocean. I know that the water in the Hawaiian Islands is quite clear, and certainly cleaner than the murky and polluted ocean in Los Angeles. Therefore, I am looking forward to that.”

When we landed at the airport in Honolulu, I was greeted by the ocean’s salty breeze. It was almost as if the ocean was greeting *me*! As soon as we arrived at the Grand Resort near the oceanside, I asked my family if we could go to the beach. But they said no, because there wasn’t enough time. However, they said my older brother Caleb could accompany me to the pool near the middle of the resort. After adjusting to the resort room, we went outside to swim.

After swimming for an hour or so, we went back to the residence to dry off, then we went to eat dinner. Because Hawaii is two hours behind LA, I was extremely tired. So after eating dinner, I decided to go to bed. As I walked back to the

residence, I gazed into the watery depths of the ocean, knowing that I couldn't go to the beach. But I knew that I would go sometime soon; I would just have to wait.

On the third day of our Hawaiian trip, the whole family finally went swimming in the ocean. It was salty, but worth waiting for! In Hawaii, I learned more than I thought I would. I learned that patience will eventually give results.

“The Scare”

By Chloe Tran

4th Grade

On March 21, 2017, I saw either a huge black alligator lizard or a snake! It happened at High Point Academy, on a ramp that we take to the field or sport court, on our last recess of the day.

I was standing on a rock to look for lizards with my two friends, Sunshine and Rebecca. After I saw the alligator lizard or snake, I jumped right off the rock. I yelled to Sunshine and Rebecca, “Come over here! You won't believe what I saw between these two rocks!”

Then they said, “What is it?”

“A snake!” I said. (That's what I thought it was, at the time.) After I said that, I told them that they probably thought I was crazy, because I don't like snakes at all. Because of their scales, they look like they are going to kill you!

“Rat Night”

By Ethan Catindig

4th Grade

Last year, on a dark night in my house, I was in my bed when I heard a strange noise. It sounded like footsteps, so I went upstairs to find out what the noise was. I was thinking that a robber was robbing my house!

I checked in the living room and the bathroom, then I checked the kitchen. When I turned on the lights, I saw a small animal eating a bag of chips I had brought home from a party and left on the floor. At first I thought it was a baby raccoon, but then I saw that it was a RAT! I screamed and I called my dad. I told him there was a rat in the kitchen. He ran up the stairs, saw the rat, and even *he* looked scared! Then he ran and opened the door and got a broom. He pushed the rat with it, but it did not move, so we got some bread and lured it near the door. Then my dad quickly pushed the rat out.

We got the rat, but my dad had to go around and check and make sure no more rats came in. We never did figure out how the rat got in, but now I know not to check on strange noises at night!

“Midnight”

By Isabella Dodd

4th Grade

It was a shadowy night. The wind was blowing through the trees like someone rushing through a door. The year was 2016. I was eight years old and I was having a sleepover at my house with my friend, Sunshine. My room was tiny, had a curtain as a door and the bed was against the wall. My friend slept on the wall side of the bed and I slept on the edge.

That night, I got up to get some water from the kitchen. On the kitchen clock, the time was 11:59. I decided I didn't need water because I was so sleepy. Then the clock struck 12:00. I went back into the bedroom and saw Sunshine, who was now awake. All of a sudden, unusual music started to play. It seemed to be coming from the front door. The music sounded like the music from a jack-in-the-box toy, but calmer. Then we both heard footsteps.

The footsteps sounded like a man's boot, then a woman's high heel. Then a man's boot again, then a woman's high heel again. The footsteps were getting closer and closer. Then Sunshine yelled, "Bella! Do you see that hand reaching into the room?" She was looking at the curtain.

"No!" I said, feeling really scared. Then the clock turned 12:01 and the hand was gone, the music stopped and there were no more footsteps. "What did the hand look like?" I asked her.

Sunshine said, "I didn't get much detail, but I know it had long extended nails!" At that point, we were *both* feeling scared. Then there was an awkward silence. "What *was* that?" she asked.

"I have no idea," I replied. For a second, we looked at each other in confusion and shock. For the rest of the night, we could not sleep. We just laid there with our eyes open.

The next morning, we had school. At school, we told a couple of people about what happened. Some people thought we were crazy. Others believed us. But we knew the truth: What we told them was true.

At recess, we tried to figure out what the thing was that had reached into the room. Sunshine and I talked and talked.

"Maybe it was a ghost!" she said.

"Maybe," I replied.

After that day, I tried staying up some nights waiting for the music and footsteps, but I never heard them again. And to this day, Sunshine and I still don't know what it was.

“The Story of Bella”

By Joel Solomon

5th Grade

It was December 22, 2013, when I came home from school and was going to my room to do my homework.

My mom said, “Joel, why do you do so much of your homework in your room?” I said, “I don’t know,” and she said, “Just do it in the dining room,” so I said, “OK.”

But I knew something was up because she *never* tells me to do that.

After I finished my homework and my dad had just come home, my mom said, “Excellent.” Then she called up to my brother, Sam, to come downstairs. When he came down, Mom said, “Let’s all go into Joel’s room TOGETHER,” and we all said OK.

When we went into my room, we found my first dog, a black lab. My parents called out, “Merry Christmas!” (Two days later, we all decided to name the dog Bella.)

My brother and I asked, “Where did you get her?” but my mom and dad just changed the subject, and we never did find out where they got Bella. But the first thing we did was to get on our knees, and Bella licked us just like a normal dog would. She licked us all over! It was all really awesome, because we wanted a dog for a long time. So we all went outside because Bella and the whole family were so excited, we needed to throw a ball around for all of us to calm down!

Bella still lives with us to this day and, about a year after we got her, we got a small dog—a brown and black mix from my dad’s friend, that we all decided to name Benny. (I forgot what the mix is, though.) Benny also still lives with us today.

And that is how we got our first dog, Bella, for Christmas!

“The Worst Injury of My Life!”

By Julia Pevsner

7th Grade

At the Gooden School in early October of 2016, the 5th grade got to use the brand-new laptops. Everyone dashed to the laptop cart. At the time, I was getting paper from my locker, so I was the last to get my laptop. When I got to my laptop, I noticed it had a glistening white cover to prevent it from breaking. It had a tiny sticker on it that said, “Laptop 20.”

I carefully took the laptop from the cart and started walking back to my seat in the classroom. I walked right behind my classmate, Jessica. I asked her if she had a textbook I could borrow because I forgot mine. She said “no,” and I was about to ask the teacher if she had a spare one, but I tripped on Jessica’s chair leg and fell right on my face!

Everyone in the classroom heard my body slam against the floor, and they began to turn around in their seats. They looked at me in horror, like they were seeing a ghost! I immediately got confused, but then I realized what they were gaping at. My teacher shrieked and I did, too, when I saw that the laptop was no longer white; the laptop *and* the floor were stained bright red. They were covered in blood—*my* blood!

My screams were so loud that (I found out later) the students across the street heard me. I started to panic because I realized that the blood was coming from my finger! I thought to myself: *If a finger is so small, how could there be so much blood coming from it? What if I popped a blood vessel?*

I ran as fast as I could to the first aid kit and put pressure on my gushing finger with cotton balls, but it did not help. By this time, it had been bleeding for five minutes and I was getting really nervous. I heard my teacher yell to my classmate, “Lindsay! Go take Julia to the nurse’s office!”

Lindsay and I ran as fast as we could. As we ran, I saw that the middle school kids were eating lunch at the lunch tables right by the nurse’s office. I was so

embarrassed! My face and eyes must have been red as fire from sobbing. The middle school kids laughed hilariously at us. We quickly decided to go the back way to the nurse's office so we could get away from the middle school kids. We finally got to the office door, and when Lindsay started to push it open, the nurse came right over to us.

I told her about the accident and she got the first aid kit as Lindsay went back to class. She told me to put my finger over the sink, so I did, and she ran freezing water over it until it stopped bleeding. I was so relieved because I thought I was going to need stitches. She put some cream on it and a Band-Aid. Then I went back to the classroom.

My laptop, the floor—and especially my finger—were all fine. Sometimes, even the worst moments of your life can quickly fade away!

“Trapped!”

By Kayley Bao

6th Grade

It happened when I was in an apartment building where my mom lived in Shanghai, China. I was only four years old and in kindergarten, when I got stuck in an elevator. It was such a long time ago that I don't remember how many floors there were in the building, but it might have been around 30 floors high.

It all started when I walking with my mom's friend, Sha ma shu shu (Sha ma shu shu is a Chinese name). My mom had gone out with her friends and he was taking care of me. Sha ma shu shu is our driver; he drives us everywhere. He's like our very own Uber! So, I went ahead into the elevator and was waiting for him, because he was right behind me. But then, the elevator doors closed and I was alone! Sha ma shu shu was not there! Just before the doors closed, I had seen him running to the elevator, but he didn't make it in time, and so the doors slammed shut, trapping me in. Suddenly, I felt that I was lost! I thought nobody would come for me, and I felt very lonely.

It was not my first time in an elevator, but I didn't press a button because I was too busy crying and didn't want to make the situation even worse. All I did was stand there and cry until I reached the top floor. I was banging on the elevator doors, sobbing, trying to get out. I was imagining that I wouldn't get to be back with my family when, all at once, the doors opened automatically and I saw that I was on a top floor where the construction workers were.

I don't know how the doors happened to open. When the workers saw me they stared at me like I was crazy. I was too scared to ask them for help, but I managed to step out of the elevator and then I saw Sha ma shu shu running up the stairs, looking worried. He picked me up and carried me away while the workers didn't do anything except continue to stare at me. Sha ma shu shu didn't say a word, but carried me to safety while I was sobbing. He put me in the car and then picked up my mom, telling her what happened. She was so glad that I was safe.

That day, I was terrified. But I learned to stay with a person I can trust, and not run ahead. Now, since I'm older, I can go into the elevator by myself, not scared; I know what to do. Also, when I'm waiting for my family or friends, I put my hand in front of the elevator doors so they won't close on people. I want to make sure to keep the doors open for them to walk through, and for me to follow, so that no one ever goes through what I did that day in China when I was trapped in an elevator all alone.

“The Deer and the Dog”

By Nicolas Beiner

6th Grade

One day, about two years ago when I was on vacation at my cousin Caeden's house in Vermont, my dog Sonny got lost in the woods! It all started when my dad, Caeden, Sonny, Caeden's dog (whose name I forgot because I haven't seen Caeden in such a long time), and I were taking a hike through the lofty woods behind Caeden's house.

As we were hiking along the dimly lit trail, my dad spotted an almond-brown deer with white spots. Before we knew it, Sonny was off and running through the trees! We tried to chase after Sonny and the deer, but they were just too fast for us. When Sonny had taken off, Caeden and I were shocked because Sonny had never done that before!

At that point, I was bawling and cried, “We’ll never find him! It’s useless to look!”

Caeden tried to comfort me by saying that this had happened to him a bunch of times before, and I believed him. Still, even while he tried to calm me down, I was sitting on the ground, crying my eyes out and thinking about all the fun times Sonny and I had together. Now, I thought, he was gone forever.

But all of a sudden, I saw Sonny and the deer dashing toward Caeden’s house! We all ran back to the house and started to look for Sonny. My dad finally found him near the back of the house, snoozing in the red-spotted strawberry patch, which was the last place we searched.

I thanked my dad over and over again, and said I would do any chores he chose for a week! (What was I thinking?) But this almost-tragic story had a pretty happy ending, apart from having to vacuum up all the accumulated dust and dog hair from the whole house, the week we got back to California. Still, even with all of the chores, I must have been quite lucky to get Sonny back, right?

“The Big Tree at Kidspace Summer Camp”

By Story Lim

4th Grade

It was a lovely summer day three years ago, and I was at Kidspace Summer Camp with my friends, Joy and Barrett, and some counselors. My friends and I were going into 2nd grade. We were all playing near a huge tree on a field when, all of a sudden, we heard a big “CRACK”! Then we saw the 250-foot tree falling! All of us started running out from under the tree.

I said, “Oh my!” as I watched the big tree fall. I was really surprised, and some kids started to cry. As it fell, I was terrified. I’m sure everyone else was terrified too, because people were still running and screaming. Most of the counselors were trying to move the kids who had been under the tree out to safety.

Sadly, Joy was seriously injured by the tree and I didn’t see her for a few days. I thought Joy had died! But she came back to camp and she turned out to be OK. Looking back, I think the tree fell because it was really old. I was really scared by the big tree that fell and, ever since that day, I don’t play near big old trees if I can help it!

“What Happens When You Watch the Wrong TV Show?”

By William Zhao

4th Grade

One night, when I was almost 9, my brother Ryan and I were watching Cartoon Network, but *Adult Swim* came on. We didn’t realize it was *Adult Swim*, so we kept watching.

Then, five minutes later, a show called *Rick & Morty* came on. When the show started, it was very creepy because when Rick was flying a space ship, a bug crashed through the ship’s window. There was blood, and there were body parts and other stuff everywhere! Then Rick and Morty started killing people!

Twenty minutes later, it was bedtime and my brother and I both had nightmares. After that day, I will *never* watch Adult Swim anymore.