

BRAVE Story Hour; with Parrots!

Proposal:

A Parrot themed Story Hour with a live African Grey Parrot who does tricks.

The Parrot, named Jasper, has an emotional support animal registration and so can legally be allowed in libraires:)

Our story hour is geared towards children age 4-9

Our Story Hour Books:

“If You Were a Parrot” by Katherine Rawson and

“Elephants Are Not Birds” by Brave Books & Ashley St. Clair

Bonus Book: A simplified version of “Alex the Parrot: No Ordinary Bird: A True Story” by Stephanie Spinner

About BRAVE Story Hour:

Hello, my name is Jennifer Cumbo and I want to do a story hour at your library about birds. I am a Flying WILD educator through the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. While working for BirdCor I hosted many Story Hours and educational workshops at our local libraries and zoos about Falcons and Hawks. The children loved to hear about our local raptors and play the bird themes games I brought along. This was all to familiarize children with birds in order to build appreciation and respect for these animals.

I currently work for the nonprofit “Friends from Zion.” We do our best to get people connected to religious social groups in the Hudson Valley depending on age range, location, and particular beliefs. Friends from Zion are sponsoring me to do Bird themed story hours with a conservative twist at our local libraries. Our proposed story hour is called “BRAVE Story Hour” and not “Parrot Story Hour” due to our desire to remain transparent with our theme. Although we will mainly be discussing birds, there are ideas touched upon that may seem contradictory to those expressed at story times such as “Drag Queen Story Hour.”

BRAVE books are a publishing company that provides a conservative alternative to current cultural activism. We are not affiliated with BRAVE books, but our story hour book “Elephants Are Not Birds” is one of their own, and we endorse their curriculum. However, words such as LGBT or God won’t be mentioned in our story hour. Although we may not agree on all things, it is important for kids to know we respect all faiths and love those in the LGBT community. Our story hour encourages kids to respect others of all backgrounds, including those in the LGBT community, more effectively than Drag Queen Story hour does.

I myself have many friends in the LGBT community and they think BRAVE Story Hour with Parrots is a great idea too.

We wish to put forth differing viewpoints on controversial issues, with material that is appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the children.

Possible sensitive material discussed:

After reading “If You Were a Parrot” by Katherine Rawson, we discuss how it is fun to pretend to be a bird, however, we must be careful not to confuse make-believe and reality. I state that “whether we are born a boy or girl, we cannot change what we are born as. We can never be anything else, including a bird.”

I then tell the kids I am going to read them a story about what happens when a bad person convinces an Elephant that he can be a bird, or anything else for that matter. I then read “Elephants Are Not Birds” by Brave Books & Ashley St. Clair. During the reading I ask questions like, “Is Mr. Bear being judgmental for telling Elephant that he can’t fly when he tries to jump off a cliff?” From experience the kids typically will say that he was not being judgmental. This is where I correct the children, and tell them that Mr. Bear was being judgmental, but judging a situation is not always a bad thing, but can be a very good thing.

Lastly, it is expressed to the children the importance of Integrity, and being happy and content with oneself, no matter what we were born as. Having Integrity means we do not demand respect from others, but we give respect to everyone equally and fairly. However, Pride is the opposite of Integrity. Pride is when we demand respect from everyone, but only respect others that agree with us; disliking everyone else.

Why you should Approve our Story Hour:

- A high-quality story hour can set the tone for a child's educational experience, and inspire positive lifelong attitudes about learning. Children who have been read to during their early years are much more likely to do well in school, read successfully, and enjoy learning.
- It is essential for kids to be exposed to animals such as our African Grey Parrot Jasper, in order for them to grow an appreciation and respect for animals.
- We encourage critical thinking by providing a global perspective on current cultural assumptions on Integrity, Pride, Judgment, and the difference between real and imaginary.



Me and Jasper the African Grey Parrot!
(He is on my shoulder 😊)



*BirdCOR is a not-for-profit program of
Genesee Valley Audubon Society, Inc.,
A chapter of National Audubon*



April 13, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

Jennifer Cumbo is one of the most impressive young people I know. She is intelligent and resourceful, and she puts herself "out there" to get involved in good causes. This is a combination which has made Jennifer successful in school projects and volunteer endeavors. She has been a dedicated volunteer for BirdCOR and Genesee Valley Audubon for over two years.

Jennifer's fascination with birds, especially crows, brought her to BirdCOR. For her independent school project, Jen has taken on the challenge of learning the science of bird banding and studying the color morphs of the White-throated Sparrow at Braddock Bay Bird Observatory, under the guidance of myself and of master bander Elizabeth Brooks. In the fall of 2007, Jennifer was able to juggle her schedule of cross-country practices with appointments associated with her independent project at Braddock Bay.

Her experience in running youth programs before I met her enabled Jennifer to select activities and plan a bird-related, after-school program for second-graders at Helmer Nature Center. She used activities from Flying WILD™, a national teacher-training program in which we have certified her as a Flying WILD Educator!

In addition to her focus on birds and conservation, Jennifer has diverse interests, from ski club to playing violin in her school's superb music program. Jen is a reader and a writer, a thinker and a doer. She is persistent in performing tasks, and is good interacting with the public.

In short, I would highly recommend Jennifer for consideration in your scholarship program. I feel confident that she would make good use of the funds, and she can count on me and my colleagues to advise her as needed.

Very truly yours,

David B. Semple
BirdCOR Program Director

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