

Inspiring Young Authors Through Digital Storytelling

In the summer of 2015 the Madison County Public Libraries (MCPL) partnered with the Partnership for Appalachian Girls' Education (PAGE) to begin an exciting outreach program to foster creativity through digital storytelling. PAGE provides innovative learning opportunities for adolescent girls in Appalachia. It is designed to help rural mountain girls enter a world that is global, digitally connected, and navigated through literacy and leadership skills. In essence, PAGE girls create advanced learning projects, read books, think critically and creatively, and discover new ways of achieving their dreams. PAGE was created by Deborah Hicks, a Research Scholar at Duke University whose vision is to empower girls to become leaders in a new Appalachia. The MCPL is happy to be a partner in this mission.

In the fall the MCPL worked hand in hand with Madison Middle School (MMS) and the PAGE girls to create digital stories. It was our hope to inspire young girls to believe in themselves, and encourage creativity through writing. The outreach program's objective was to teach the elements of a story in a classroom setting, and help guide the girls in the writing process. The MCPL Technology Instructor, Director, and PAGE Coordinator instructed a total of 25 girls in 6th-8th grade over a 4 month period of time during their elective class at MMS. After brainstorming sessions, each PAGE girl outlined their story, drawing inspiration from the amazing illustrations from Storybird. Storybird is a free and safe platform for writers, readers, and artists of all ages. Storybird creates a positive community for creativity by collecting artwork from illustrators and animators around the world to inspire writers to turn images into fresh stories.

Utilizing Storybird as our digital platform, each PAGE girl was assigned an account to create her story. After several writing sessions, each PAGE girl met with the Instruction Team to edit and finesse their unique story. It was a valuable opportunity for us to encourage and teach the girls the entire process of writing, as well as develop stronger relationships with each girl.





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The biggest obstacle in the process was coordinating with MMS and ensuring the outreach project did not interfere with the girls' regular coursework. Thankfully, MMS was very encouraging of the project and continues to work in partnership with MCPL on other outreach projects.

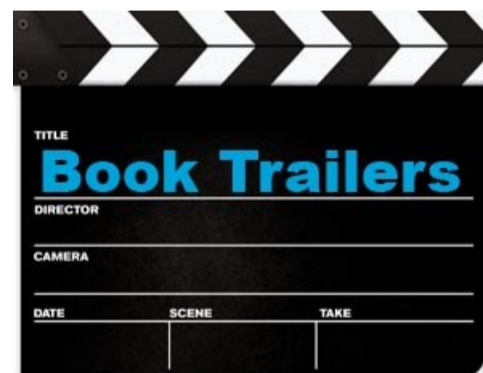
At the completion of the project, the PAGE girls' digital stories were published and cataloged at MCPL to use with the libraries' *Read With Me* program. *Read With Me* partners therapy dogs with children who need a little extra help with their reading skills. It is exciting and gratifying to see the PAGE girls visit the library and find their one of a kind book on the shelf. "This enrichment opportunity helped teach the PAGE girls they can be what they want to be," said Nancy Allen, PAGE Coordinator. "Publishing a book at an early age is quite an accomplishment. This shows them they can go on to college and do the things they need to succeed." Ella, a 6th grade PAGE girl reflected on her experience with the program. "It's really cool to write and create our own books."

In April, the MCPL hosted a special Young Author's Tea to celebrate this amazing accomplishment with parents, the community, and school officials. During the presentation each PAGE girl was photographed with their book for the local paper, and also participated in an author book signing for the public. We hope the girls will aspire to continue with their writing, and have the confidence in themselves to further their education and future goals drawing from this positive experience. During the 2016-2017 school year, the MCPL will continue its partnership with PAGE and MMS to encourage literacy and creativity utilizing technology to tell a story. It is our hope to continue to be a part of the PAGE program's mission to create a new Appalachia.

Note: We also offer an adapted version of this program for the general public.

Next Project:

- Book Trailers
- Movie Premier with red carpet



Additional Internet Resources:

Prezi: http://prezi.com/ldxb7gl3l188/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

PAGE <http://carolinapage.org/>

Storybird <https://storybird.com/>

Madison County Public Libraries <http://www.madisoncountylibrary.net/>

Storybird "Writing a Children's Book" <https://storybird.com/books/writing-a-childrens-book/?token=hfpunzdrsx>

Storybird "How to Create Your Own Storybird" <https://storybird.com/books/how-to-create-your-own-storybird/?token=qnjb2hc8m6>