

Lincoln School Foundation

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Children’s book author visits Hanscom

“What do you like on your pizza?” Bryan Collier asked students at the Hanscom campus in June. The illustrator and author used a pizza analogy to encourage participation and help students understand the concept of putting different things together to make something new. He uses a variety of “ingredients” to make up his art, combining watercolors and collages to illustrate his books and to help make complex issues of social justice accessible to young people.

Bryan has illustrated more than 25 books for skilled authors and poets, such as Doreen Rappaport, Langston Hughes, Nikki Grimes, and Nikki Giovanni. He has been awarded the Coretta Scott King Award, the Caldecott Honor Award, the Ezra Jack Keats New Illustrator Award, and The Jane Adams Children’s Book Award. His visit to the Hanscom campus was championed by Nancy Rote, Hanscom Library Media Specialist, and supported by a grant from the Lincoln School Foundation and from the District.

Mr. Collier spoke first with students in grades 6 and 7. He engaged the students by reading from his books and having students act out poses of various characters. With the younger kids he stressed the importance of reading. “A good reader makes a good writer,” he told them. He shared his memories of reading *The Snowy Day* (by Ezra Jack Keats) and *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (by Crockett Johnson) as a boy and recalled that he liked the stories, but he **really** liked the pictures. He confessed to being more comfortable drawing and painting than writing, but with one book under his belt and another in the works, he is challenging himself to do more writing.

Mr. Collier began making art when he was 15. He left his home in Maryland for New York after being awarded a scholarship to study art at the Pratt Institute, and there he stayed. So when his editor told him “Write about what you know,” *Uptown*, a story about living in Harlem, emerged as his first book as an author. When home in his studio in New York, he spends 10-12 hours a day painting, and spends 7-10 days on each of his watercolor pieces.

Students and teachers alike seemed to enjoy the respite from their hectic end-of-the-year schedules as they sat back and listened to Mr. Collier read several of his books, including *I, Too, Am America* by Langston Hughes. Mr. Collier’s art gives renewed energy

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to Hughes's well-known poem and presents a powerful visual reminder of the struggle for equality in American history. Mr. Collier talked to the students about connections, about history as a chain and how everything and everyone is connected. He encouraged students to express themselves, share their experiences, and tell their own stories through art.

About the LSF – Grants from the Lincoln School Foundation enrich the curriculum, extend professional development, and build partnerships between the schools and the community. Since its inception in 1988, the Lincoln School Foundation (LSF) has established a proud tradition of awarding community-raised funds to faculty and school administrators who strive for educational excellence in the Lincoln and Hanscom schools.

Our Mission – The Lincoln School Foundation is dedicated to supporting the students, faculty, and administration of the Lincoln Schools by awarding privately-funded grants which enrich the curriculum, extend professional development, and enhance the school and community partnership.

How we differ from the PTO – The LSF enables our teachers and staff to reach beyond traditional programs and uncover new and innovative tools and techniques to bring to the classroom. LSF grants provide the seed money to make these programs a reality. The PTO plays an important role in funding long-standing programs that have become core elements in the curriculum, yet fall outside the school's operating budget. Together, these two organizations provide tremendous resources for our school community.