

# Port Advances

Port Washington Union Free School District



## Storytime Theater Makes an Appearance at South Salem Elementary School

Creative drama has the experience of the participants as the goal. If you have ever taken a drama class or performed in a play, you will know how different this is from a rehearsal or a more traditional theater class where the goal is preparing for a performance.

The first graders at South Salem Elementary School recently enjoyed a program from Mrs. Elise May's Storytime Theater. Storytime Theater is a form of creative drama which provides a supportive environment for children to experience books in a literary, artistic, imaginative and social atmosphere. It includes dramatic play, story enactment, imagination journeys and theatre games. "Let's pretend!" is the norm in this class.

Each class begins with Mrs. May's engaging reading of a book after which the class created simple props, learned acting and vocal exercises and acted out the story. The story's focus is a lesson that has new impact when the story is brought to life. Mrs. May read three stories to the first graders. They were *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, *Too Much Noise* and *The Doorbell Rang*. After reading the story, Mrs. May becomes the director and the students her actors. When the children's imagination and creativity were combined with Mrs. May's directing, the book turned into a theatrical performance.

All readers find explorative drama through literature empowering and challenging. Storytime Theater improves skills in concentration, focus, sensory awareness, listening, linguistics, problem solving and relationships as well as boosting self-esteem. As part of the school district's focus on literacy, Storytime Theater helps students become more interested, involved and excited about reading.