

RECOMMENDATION AND COMMENTARY

LETTER OF PRESENTATION RECOMMENDATION

To Whom It My Concern:

I am happy to write this letter to share with you the wonderful rapport Wendy Torrel, author of Guardian of Dreams has with people of all ages, especially children. She presented her book not only to our lower grade students, but to our entire student body – grades kindergarten through fifth.

Her ability to connect with our students and her talent in reading aloud, dramatizing her story and asking higher level questions to develop the theme nightmares in her story book, build comprehension, vocabulary and shift the students' thoughts from having a nightmare to thinking about what they want to be when they grow up are truly superior! She has an excellent sensitivity to the mood of the students as she monitors their understanding of the concepts involved and elicits text to self connections, visualizing and vocabulary development from the students in a very engaging way – even our most challenged students sat quietly, listened, responded to the story and were able to verbalize what they wanted to be when they grow up. One of them asked if he could be an author!

Wendy Torrel also initiates conversations about the writing and publishing process and provides each class with a mini writing lesson so they can aspire to become authors, like her! The students react with great enthusiasm to this experience from a real author! She is an accomplished presenter with great initiative and a very positive attitude on the theme of nightmares which is a difficult theme for children and adults to face.

I recommend you book a workshop with Wendy Torrel without reservation.

Elementary School – Assistant Principal

References Furnished Upon Request

ABOUT THE PRESENTATION

“Being the Special Ed Supervisor here, I have watched teachers interact with the students every day but I was so impressed by the way in which you connected to each student at their level and engaged the student in “accountable talk” even though you are not a teacher by profession. I was amazed at how quickly and eagerly some of our most challenging students were able to share personal stories and dreams of what they would like to be when they grow up. The children were completely engaged while you shared your book at the rug—they actually sat quietly and participated in conversations for 45 minutes! You even sparked the interest of the children in writing and creating a possibility in their mind that they could actually be authors themselves! One of the children in that class has been asking me when you would be coming back!

Your presentation of “nightmares” with such an empowering spin was awesome! It even created a place for the Kindergartners to externalize their nightmares and draw some beautiful illustrations which you will find enclosed.”

Elementary School Assistant Principal

“Wendy Torrel, author of Guardian of Dreams, visited our school, an all-girls charter school in the lower East Side of New York City. Wendy read her book aloud to our kindergarten, first and second grade groups and then led a question and answer period. Our girls were very attentive as she read to them. Some students asked their parents to purchase the book for them.”

After the reading, our girls made comments like, “I want to be an author when I grow up!” Nicole, 2nd grader said, “The book made me feel happy. I’m glad the bunny got his nightmares taken away.”

During the question and answer period, the girls were very excited and asked questions about what it is like to be an author. Wendy was very informative and overall patient. It was a great experience for our students.

Girls Prep School, Director of Student and Family Affairs

Our after-school program had the pleasure of hosting a visit from author Wendy Torrel this year. She visited each of our kindergarten through fifth grade groups and read from her children’s book, Guardian of Dreams. In addition, to the reading, she was able to engage the children in discussions around the books difficult topic of coping with nightmares. Her visit and the

characters in her book helped several of our children to find the strength to talk about and confront some of their own nightmares.

A few weeks after Wendy's visit, it came to my attention that one of our third graders was refusing to participate in swimming lessons with his group, despite his love of the water. After talking to him, it was revealed that he was scared to change in the locker room before and after swimming and part of that fear was connected to his frequent nightmares. I reminded him of Wendy's story and we practiced "poofing" his bad dreams and fears away, like the rabbit does in the book. After thinking about Wendy's words, he was able to find the courage to change before swimming and participate in his favorite activity again.

A second grader in our program was inspired by Wendy's career journey from police officer to author. After Wendy read and talked with our second graders, this particular young woman was empowered to translate her love and aptitude of writing into an idea of having a career in writing. She now proudly introduces herself as a "writer" to anyone she meets.

Guardian of Dreams is a powerful way for children to begin to talk about and confront the sometimes very secret and private nightmares that they may be struggling with every night.

After-School Program Coordinator