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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

Fifth graders learn that poetry can be fun

Summary: University of Minnesota, Morris students in Introduction to Literature classes have been working on a service learning project to help Morris Area Elementary School fifth graders learn about and write their own poetry.

(December 13, 2007)-University of Minnesota, Morris students in Brook Miller's Introduction to Literature classes have been working on a service learning project to help Morris Area Elementary School fifth graders learn about and write their own poetry. Miller developed the course project during the service-learning faculty fellows program in summer 2007 in response to a need to teach some Minnesota state education standards in a way that would excite students about reading and writing. UMM students planned lessons based on the MAES students' interests, working one-on-one to make the lessons the most effective for each individual student.

The project ended on November 19 with a celebration at which the fifth graders read their poetry. Each student received an anthology of poems written by students in each fifth grade class. The anthology includes acrostic poems (poem in which particular letters, for example, the first in each line, spell a word or phrase), animal poems, poems modeled after a style/idea in a published poem, haikus and more.

"The fifth graders learned that poetry can be fun. It is fun to see where their imaginations can go," said Briana Sadecki, UMM first-year student.

The service learning program supports faculty, students and community partners in creating community-based learning opportunities that meet community needs and student learning goals. Introduction to Literature is one of about 20 service-learning courses offered at UMM each year.

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