

Woodward families gather for writing night

At home, Louie Castro occasionally enjoys doing some leisurely writing.

He had a chance to exercise his creativity outlet Tuesday during Family Writing Night at Woodward School.

"This time, I get to write with my family," said Castro, who was joined by daughters, Fatima and Stephanie, respectively, third- and first- grade students at the school.

The Castros were one of 20 families invited to the inaugural event celebrating the National Day of Writing. Thirteen actually attended the family function held in the multi-purpose building, according to Woodward teachers Michelle Crippen and Brenda Madsen.

The National Day of Writing is sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and co-sponsored locally by the Great Valley Writing Project.

The participating families had a chance to express their creativity via six-room poem, a free verse as described by Georgia Head in *Awakening the Heart*.

The contents of the six-room poem, in this case, consisted of image, light, sounds, questions, feelings and repetition.

Take sound, for example. Families did their best in brainstorming, say, "silence" or "rustling of leaves."

Each of the families had a chance to read their poems out aloud. Before hand, they were given a folder with information on the National Day of Writing and the six-room poem.

According to Crippen, students involved in this exercise will receive a homework pass. Each family was entered into a drawing with a chance to win National Writing Project journals and pens.

In addition, plans call for the work of each the participating families to soon be available to the public online.

For Stacy Hulchison, Family Fun Night meant spending quality time with her 9-year-old daughter Madison, a fourth-grade student at Woodward.

"It's one kid at a time," she said.

Hulchison added that the family activity enabled her to think creatively.

That's the idea, according to Kathy Harvey, a retired Woodward teacher who, along with Crippen and Madsen, is a GVWP teacher consultant.

"From here, we're hoping to encourage families to write in their own homes," she said.

GVWP at California State University, Stanislaus, is an affiliate of the California Writing Project, with the latter celebrating its 35th year anniversary.

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