



# *Hawthorne Elementary School*

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To Whom It May Concern:

Baxter and his father gave the students and teachers at eleven elementary schools in Helena, Montana the boost and inspiration needed to inspire them to read, write and illustrate books.

Warren students were very excited when they heard that the author and illustrator of Old king Stinky Toes were coming to our school. They all loved the book. The minute our visitors arrived, excitement started building. It was lunchtime so they had to set up their equipment while the students were eating, which led to more excitement and lots of questions. When the assembly started, the students were on their best behavior out of respect and awe for this real live author who was so close to their own ages. The jumping exercise livened things up, and the students were enthralled during the reading of the story and Baxter's comments. The students who were chosen to ask questions were very excited and honored. Our television station sent a camera man who interviewed Baxter after the presentation. A very nice segment was shown on the evening news as well as the 10:00 news. All the teachers who were present for the assembly have given me wonderful feedback. While the third graders were writing thank-you notes, I realized that they were truly inspired by Baxter and they are enthused about writing. The teachers are hoping to build on this new-found excitement.

The excitement was palpable as Jim Darcy students anticipated Baxter Owen Graham's arrival for his visit to our school on February 8, 2007. The thrill of meeting a published author would have been enough, but the fact that Baxter is from Montana and that he wrote such a wonderful book at such a young age was the ultimate inspiration. Upon his entering the school, the students were captivated by his charm and infectious enthusiasm; teachers were impressed by his professionalism and excellent presentation. Baxter's impression on the students of Jim Darcy will be long lasting. As the librarian, I have had several parents reach out to tell me that Baxter ignited a writing fire in their children. Parents, teachers, and students are so thankful for his visit.

Baxter demonstrated as much poise in his presentation as any speaker, including adults, whom I've had in my library. His manners are impeccable, he tried to answer every question and look at every child. I felt that he cared for each of them. Even at the end of the third day of multiple presentations, he brought enthusiasm and energy to his performance. The students loved him as did the teachers!!! I can't thank him and his support crew enough.

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"Our goal isn't to fill our shelves with books. Our goal is to store our collection in the homes of all of our users."

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