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Former Alaskan sled dog racer tours country telling “Foxy’s Tale”

Chatham Park students were excited to meet the real-life dog sled racer they had studied in class

By Amanda Rittenhouse

Staff Writer

Students of the Haverford School District were readers of the pack when children’s book author Ed White visited the school last month.

White, author of “Foxy’s Tale — The True Story of a Champion Alaskan Sled Dog,” visited with students in Judy Saunders second grade class at Chatham Park Elementary. The visit took place in March after the class studied the book as part of the social studies curriculum.

“It was a neat feeling, seeing the book in Barnes and Noble,” said White. “But, going to the classrooms to speak to the kids is just the absolute thrill.”

White’s 77-page illustrated book is told from Foxy, the sled dog’s, perspective and was illustrated by Charles Lindemuth.

Foxy is a small dog with a big heart, who, despite physical injuries, competes in dog sled races in Alaska with White’s daughter, Kelly.

White, a resident of State College, lived in Alaska for 17 years, where Foxy and Kelly competed in the Junior World Championship Sled Dog Race in Anchorage.

White said he got inspiration to write the book after a friend told him it would make a great story, and as a way to help his daughter remember dog sled racing. After allowing local kids to read his book, and receiving a positive response, he decided to look around for a publisher.

The book was published in 1995 and since then has sold over 18,000 copies. White said he gets a lot of letters from teachers and students.

“I had no idea it would have impact on kids like it did,” he said.

White has spoken to schools across the country through the Iditarod's reading program. His presentation is based on the students knowing the background of the book and he said the students get excited to see artifacts from Foxy's real life, such as her bridle.

"Chatham has been one of the best schools I've been to," White said. "There were students waiting for me at the door, who were so excited and wanted to talk about the book."

Prior to his retirement in 2000, White worked as the head of administration of the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska.

Since then, he wrote another book about a little girl he met in Ethiopia, during his service in the army in 1970s.

The book, titled "African Treasure," chronicles the relationship he had with an African family in war-torn Ethiopia, and how they were reunited.

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