

Eagle Foundation Grant Application

Approved for \$1,500 – Spring 2022

Applicant: Stephanie Sevcik

School(s): Middlesex Elementary School

Department (if applicable): Elementary

Title of Project: Virtual Author Visit

Type of Project: New Innovative Project

Purpose: I would like to bring the children's author, Lauren Tarshis, virtually to Middlesex Elementary School.

Project Description: Lauren Tarshis: Live and Virtual Author Presentation Description

As an author of historical fiction for children, I like to pull students into the research process, to show them how an author “goes back in time” by reading books, studying maps and paintings, watching videos, poring over diaries and other primary sources. This is the most fascinating part of the process for me, and I find that students are shocked and intrigued to hear details of this process, and to learn just what it takes to create a story that is rooted in actual events. I aim to open doors of curiosity for them, to inspire them to take learning journeys of their own. If I can do it, they can too!

I also share my personal story, how I overcame reading difficulties (I didn't read a book until high school) to become a children's author. My journey is one of many “failures,” and it is one that resonates deeply with many of the kids I present to. Even after presenting to thousands of children around the country, I am always amazed to see how kids respond to this message: that it is not inborn talent that leads to success, but the ability to pick oneself up after failure and keep going. This theme of resilience also underlies all of the stories in my I

Survived series.

My presentation is dynamic and interactive, with visuals throughout. The popularity of the I Survived series has led me to increase the amount of time I allot for student questions. Their wonderful and thoughtful questions can take me — and the rest of the audience — into an exploration of the process of researching, writing, and editing and also into the historical events that I write about. I love to take them further into the events, and to help guide them in their personal quests to learn more.

Finally, my presentation has been shaped by my more than 25 years of experience as a creator of stories and language arts resources for elementary and middle school children. I am currently SVP, Editor-in-Chief and Publisher of Scholastic Classroom Magazines, where I oversee 21 classroom magazines, including Storyworks and Storyworks Jr., ELA magazines with a combined readership of over 1.5 million 3-5th graders. In this role, I have helped lead my company's efforts to create print and digital resources that are thrilling and joyful for students and teachers. These resources spark curiosity and build skills that students need to become analytical readers and engaged learners.

Approximate Number of Students Impacted: approximately 250

Others That Would Benefit: At least 15 , possibly more depending on the numbers available to Zoom

Justification of Project: With all students, but particularly those at Middlesex finding that something to hook reluctant readers is key. The "I Survived" series by Lauren Tarshis is consistently a series that hooks our readers. In the words of our IMC Aide "Those books fly off the shelves." In addition to hooking our readers, I truly believe that Ms. Tarshis' story of overcome her difficulties with reading will inspire and give hope to many of our struggling readers.

Total Budget Request: Lauren's virtual appearance fee for two presentations is \$3,000, and \$1,500 for one. My hope would be for two appearances, to give more students the

opportunity to ask questions and interact with Ms. Tarshis. However, if the one appearance option is the only one financially available. I would figure out a way to make it work.

Budget Information: Lauren is nearly fully committed for the current school year. If you are interested in a date later in the school year, here are some available dates:

April 7 and 8

April 29

May 6, 13, 20, 26, 27

June 2,3

If any of these dates might work for you, here are Lauren's appearance parameters:

- One or two 60 minute presentations, including Q&A - on Zoom, Teams, Google Meet -- whichever platform works best for your school. (Lauren prefers Zoom if possible)

Note Lauren's presentation is geared to 3rd-5th graders, the target age for her I Survived series.

- Complimentary signed bookplates will be sent ahead of her virtual appearance for any book orders that you might do.

- Lauren will donate a complete collection of signed I Survived books to your library with two presentations, 10 signed books with one.

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(Note recording of Lauren's presentation is not permitted).