The Shakespeare Project is Afoot

Apr. 26 2012, St. Paul, MN

The Shakespeare Project’s community reading is set for May 30th at Magers and Quinn Booksellers (3038 Hennepin Avenue South, Minneapolis). The reading will take place at 6 pm and will include readings by any GED student interested in sharing their writing, not just those involved in the project. The students will read their own writings they have developed over a 15-week period of reading Shakespeare’s Macbeth. The project consists of roughly 25 students at Rondo, Lake Street, and North Side learning centers. The Lake Street location holds two readings, one in the afternoon and another in the evening.

Similar projects that expose under-served populations to Shakespeare have been successful in the past, but this is the first of its kind for the Literacy Council. A goal of the project is to create a sense of confidence in the students and prepare them for college-level material. The project was inspired by a small group of students who got together to read Romeo and Juliet. This small session was a success, and the idea for the Shakespeare Project was born.

The project consists of one-hour sessions once a week, where volunteer tutors guide students through a section of the text, stopping to discuss and share their thoughts on the play. Students are actively engaged in reading and discussion through a number of activities, including writing prompts that allow for self-reflection in relation to the reading material.

Interspersed throughout the project are designated writing days. On these days the students are given a writing prompt and spend the whole hour working on their writing skills. The emphasis on reading and writing is the core of the project, as one of its main goals is to improve GED test scores through increased reading comprehension and writing skills.

The community reading will provide the public with an opportunity to see the incredible potential of GED students. The Shakespeare Project hopes to shed some light on GED training and dispel many myths surrounding GED students: mainly that it is a waste of time to teach them Shakespeare. The team leading the project believes that GED students are capable of more than they are given credit for, and the reading will be a chance to present that idea to a larger audience.

Anyone looking to get involved should come out to the community reading. All volunteer positions are filled for this session, but the project needs support for next year.

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