

# SPECIAL FOCUS

*We did, in the Spring issue of Perspectives, provide some information about Young Writers' Day, 1986. But that was by way of anticipation. After the fact, we asked some of the people most intimately involved, both in the making and in the implementation of the plans, how the event actually came off. They were quite enthusiastic. And since this apparently successful venture was something of an innovation for us, we figured our readers would understand our desire to give it a little more exposure. The Writers' Day was a project sponsored by the Federation Board of Protestant Reformed School Societies. The Teacher Educational Development Committee (a committee of the Federation) was responsible for setting up general guidelines. But all of the details were worked out by the three people who agreed to serve as directors. The three were teachers: John Kalsbeek, from Adams, and Jim Huizinga and Cal Kalsbeek of Covenant Christian High School. We commend them for a job well done. And we thank Mr. Huizinga for providing us with the following account of the activities of the day. (The picture on the cover, by the way, is of Mr. Huizinga's daughter, Susanne, a Young Writers' Day writer.)*

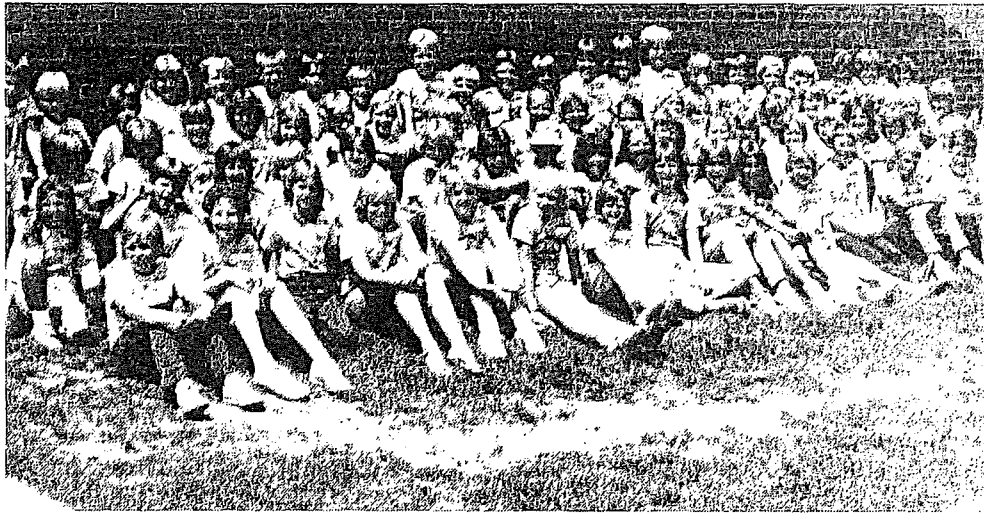
## Young Writers' Day Review

Jim Huizinga

On July 15, 1986, Young Writers' Day was held at Heritage Christian School. After much effort and no small amount of anxiety on the part of the planning committee, the long-awaited day arrived. It was a hot day in early summer, but that didn't lessen the enthusiasm of

either students or teachers. From the point of view of those of us who worked on Young Writers' Day, it was a pleasant success.

We believe that Young Writers' Day is unprecedented in the history of Protestant Reformed Christian education. The Federation of Protestant Reformed

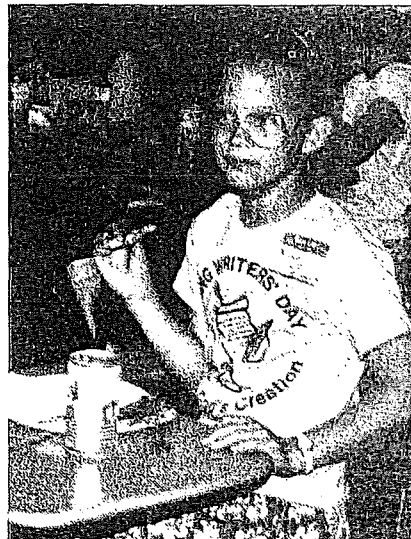


Christian Schools has sponsored many worthwhile projects in recent years, but never an event like this. Eighty-one youngsters in grades 3-5, from 4 different Protestant Reformed Schools participated. Schools represented were Hope, Heritage, Adams Street, and South Holland. Eight teachers and eight teacher assistants were there to help the young writers in their work.

Young Writers' Day was an exciting and fun day for all who participated. Everyone, including the teachers and teacher assistants, were given an official Young Writers' Day tee-shirt that proudly displayed the Young Writers' Day theme. There was ample time for play and fellowship, and at lunch time everyone was treated to pizza and pop. Perhaps the most popular fun-time activity was the 45 minutes that the young writers had cooling off in the pool at Hudsonville High

School at the end of the day.

Young Writers' Day was not all fun and games, however. We believe that the young writers had a genuinely good time functioning as Christian young writers. MAN AND GOD'S CREATION was the theme for the day. The day's format consisted of 3 parts. After orientation and devotions, PRE-WRITING EXERCISES were held. The purpose of these exercises was to start the young



writers thinking about some of the important aspects of the Young Writers' Day theme. Brenda Regnerus and Linda Van Baren, both teachers in our South Holland Christian School, combined to give an excellent picture presentation which showed that man must take care of God's creatures. John Kalsbeek, from Adams Street, used a film and a few well chosen comments to show the young writers that man often abuses God's creatures. Winifred Koole and Antoinette Quenga, from Hope, also give stimulating presentations. Miss Koole used a short story to dramatize the fact that often God's creatures are useful to man. Mrs. Quenga drew from her experiences on the island of Guam to show that nature, particularly violent winds, can be harmful to man.

We believe that these PRE-WRITING EXERCISES accom-

plished two things. In the first place, they stimulated, in a powerful way, the young writers to think about the important relationship that they have with God's creation. In the second place, these activities gave the young writers an abundance of material that they could use in their own stories.

Following the pre-writing part of the day, the young writers were divided into small groups. Each group was led by a teacher and a teacher assistant. Within these groups, the young writers were reminded of the Young Writers' Day theme and of the important things they learned during PRE-WRITING. After a brief discussion they were asked to write an original story that in some way had to do with man's relationship to God's creatures. Having teacher assistants working in the small groups proved valuable, not only from the point





of view of the extra help they were able to give the young writers, but also, seeing that many of the assistants are interested in teaching, they had a fine oppor-

tunity to find out what it is all about.

The writing session lasted until noon. After pizza and kickball, we all came together again in our small writing groups. It was now time for RE-WRITING. The teachers had examined the papers while the writers were on the playground. Now, with the help of their assistants, they tried to show each young writer how to improve his or her story. Much progress was made making good stories better. The young writers, perhaps, learned that good writing does not come easily. Most of them worked hard right up until the end of the session.

By the time Young Writers' Day was coming to a close, all the young writers were ready for a swim. We came together again in the gym to sing and thank God



## FEATURES

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for a good day. The young writers were then dismissed with the promise that soon after school began in the fall they would be given a booklet containing all the stories written by all the young people who attended Young Writers' Day, 1986.

Was the day a success? We believe that it was. A great deal of money was spent, and a great deal of time and effort was put into this one-day event. Those of us who were there, however, were inspired by the way the young writers conducted themselves. They were eager to learn and obviously enjoyed thinking of themselves as writers. We believe that a day such as this can do much to develop a positive attitude toward writing in the minds of our children. Such an attitude, if properly nurtured, can only grow as the children go on with their

education. If Young Writers' Day, in some small way, helped to foster good attitudes toward writing, then certainly the day was worth the effort.

Those of us who planned Young Writers' Day, 1986 are grateful to all the young people who participated. We are equally grateful to their parents for sending them. We thank too all the teachers and teacher assistants who agreed to help out, especially those teachers who gave presentations during the PRE-WRITING EXERCISES. We thank the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools for its financial support. Most importantly, we are grateful to God Who gives us an opportunity to help prepare His children for service in His Kingdom.

We hope to be involved in Young Writers' Day, 1987.



## FEATURES

*Our Winter, 1986 issue included two "Viewpoints" on the matter of home-schooling. Both articles were short, intended to be personal opinions more than detailed analyses of the subject. We make good now on our promise at that time to return to the topic in a later issue of our magazine. To begin, we have the text of a speech given at the P.T.F.A. meeting of Covenant Christian High School on April 25, 1985, by Prof. Robert Decker, of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches. In that speech he took the position that home schooling may indeed be preferred if a good, solidly Reformed school is unavailable. He spoke in the context of our own Protestant Reformed, Christian*