

FEATURED

# Students learn how to build stories

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These recent second and third grade graduates participated in Union Primary School's LEGO Writer's Camp. On the screen is a digital version of the LEGO book they've created.

TERRAN YOUNG PHOTO

**BIG STONE GAP** — Union Primary and Union Middle school students have used literal building blocks to learn how to build written stories.

The LEGO Writer's Camp took place from June 4-8 and June 11-15 at the two schools. The camp allows students to use LEGO blocks to build scenes and then write about what they imagine is happening in the scene. The program consisted of recently graduated second and third grade students at the primary school and fifth graders at the middle school level.

Union Primary teachers Sonya Gilley and Ninkey McCarty hosted the children in their classroom.

While the program is fun, it's also intensive. The students don't get recess like the other summer programs; they work hard on their stories. The students learn about the parts of a story, conflict, editing and revision. By the end of the project, the students authored and illustrated a book and received a print copy.

This was the first year that the program was brought to the middle school. Teachers Amy Slagle and Dena Barton focused on using more advanced vocabulary.

"We are thankful that Amy Clark and the Slempp Foundation offered this at the middle school level because I feel like they are just now getting their voice," said Slagle. "They are just now starting to use their imagination to put together the plots and develop more complicated scenarios."

The LEGO Writers Camp is part of the Appalachian Writing Project, which was founded in 2001 at the University of Virginia's College at Wise. While the Appalachian Writing Project is primarily for teachers, Professor Amy Clark and other founders of the project wanted to expand it to the youth of the region.

Most of the funding for the Appalachian Writing Project goes toward the teachers' program. The Slempp Foundation, however, supports the Young Writer's Project and the LEGO Writer's Camp.

This year, due to funding from the Slempp Foundation and community members, the LEGO Writer's Camp expanded to Lee County as well.

If you want to donate or provide LEGOs, you can do so by contacting Amy Clark at [adc5q@uvawise.edu](mailto:adc5q@uvawise.edu) or Ninkey McCarty at [lmccarty@wisek12](mailto:lmccarty@wisek12).

URL: [http://www.thecoalfieldprogress.com/news/students-learn-how-to-build-stories/article\\_11244232-74ca-11e8-9bd7-83e1202d15ac.html](http://www.thecoalfieldprogress.com/news/students-learn-how-to-build-stories/article_11244232-74ca-11e8-9bd7-83e1202d15ac.html)