

As the chairperson of Authors and Illustrators Night at Lowell Bayside Academy in Long Beach, I can only rave about Lori Polydoros and her role in our first-time event.

She was an engaging speaker, who used her storytelling skill, humor and conversational tone to swiftly hook the audience of parents, children and school faculty. Her Dear Santa letter is a memorable moment in a memorable presentation. It is comical, yet belies how skillfully she gets across to an audience that good writing CAN produce actual rewards. Who can't relate to a good Santa letter delivering a shiny new bike?

The children and the adults loved her. Lori can deftly handle a large or more intimate audience. For our event, she spoke to more than 200 people and offered a power point visual presentation, came totally prepared, was flexible with some snags in school equipment, and remained unflappable. Even the other authors enjoyed her approach.

Then Lori led a writing workshop for about 35 students and parents in which she helped each create an adventure story. Participants were led through the mechanics of writing, but in such a delightful manner that it felt like play instead of learning. Lori brought costumes for participants to wear in acting out their story idea. And even at 8 p.m., nobody wanted to leave her workshop.

Long before our March 30 event, Lori offered her extensive experience with school author events to help me structure the program, order books and generally calm first-timer nerves.

I would recommend her to anyone, and have. Our school librarian and principal are already interested in inviting her back next year.