

Bard doors

Shakespeare workshop opens young minds to classic playwright

By RAVEN WUEBKER

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LAKE JACKSON

The Lake Jackson Historical Association “compared thee to a summer’s day” while teaching the works of William Shakespeare to children from the area.

The children experienced Shakespeare in a hands-on way through the museum instead of behind the desk, said Wes Copeland, executive director of the Center for the Arts and Sciences.

“That language is dense and sometimes it’s difficult

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Kendall Morgan, workshop participant

and hard to decipher and decode,” Copeland said. “I have found that I could bring students into an environment where they can make it come alive through action. They fall in love with it and start to understand the stories better and know what is being said.”

About a dozen kids signed up for the Shakespeare workshop. Copeland went over the history of Shakespeare, his biography and why the playwright is important in the world of Western literature, he said at the start of the three-hour workshop.

“I am trying to keep everything performance-based so we’ll certainly look at the writing and the poetry, but what is fun is putting it

into action,” he said. “We’ll take a Shakespeare monologue and have a puppet show with it and we’ll do Shakespeare insults and we’ll have safe fight choreography, a sword-fighting with bats, and keep it active and fun.”

This will hopefully spark some interest for continued exploration of Shakespeare in their lives, he said.

“I honestly knew about Shakespeare, but I didn’t know much about him and my grandma kinda got me into Shakespeare,” 11-year-old Abigail King said. “When I was little, she would tell me all these stories. I hope they tell us where he got his inspiration and I hope we learn all the stuff about him.”

Marin Bowling, 12, looks forward to the educational portion of the workshop, she said.

“I came here because I enjoy different types of plays and learning about Shakespeare. I like the costumes,” Bowling said. “I’m not sure what I hope to learn; I like learning.”

Bowling’s mother, Quincie Bowling of Lake Jackson, hopes the workshop broadens her children’s minds to different types of acting and learning the craft, she said.



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Sarah Bartlett, left, and Kendall Morgan practice their swordfight acting during a training exercise at the Shakespeare summer camp Thursday at the Lake Jackson Historical Museum.



JEREMY HILL/The Facts

Hayden Fournier help solve a poetry puzzle Thursday during the Shakespeare summer camp at the Lake Jackson Historical Museum.



JEREMY HILL/The Facts

Tyler Devin, center, works on his parry under the instruction of Wesley Copeland, executive director of the Center for Arts and Science, during the Shakespeare summer workshop Thursday in Lake Jackson.

Bard

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"I hope this kinda teaches them the origins of performing and where it all started," she said. "I think this is great, just another one of the things that bring the community together, and I think bringing the younger members of the community into the museum and showing what the city has to offer does help."

With her children's love of performing, Bowling thought the workshop would continue their interest further, she said.

"I brought them because they figured out last year that they really loved acting," she said. "They participated in a musical theater workshop, and my oldest was a part of the chorus in 'Tuck Everlasting.' They just fell in love with performing, so they show a lot of interest in any workshop or anything geared around acting."

With Shakespeare being such an influential person in history, 11-year-old Kendall Morgan had hopes of getting a deeper dive into the Renaissance period, she said.

"Shakespeare is one of my interests and I like how he put tragedy and romance in some of his plays and some of his quotes," Morgan said. "I like the medieval time period. I love history. It is one of my favorite subjects. I hope to know where he got his quotes and about his family life."

There is certainly a lot of history from Shakespeare and the time period, Copeland said.

"He was writing for plays, something you go and watch, or you perform it, not necessary that you sit down and read and answer a lot of questions about it," he said. "That's the point with this. We started looking at ways to do events that would cross-promote all that."

There is a lot that can be said about Shakespeare and his influence on history, Copeland said.

By teaching children the history of Shakespeare, they are also learning how he is relevant today, he said.

"We're hoping the kids come in and can learn while having fun," Lake Jackson Executive Director Lindsay Scovil said. "This is summer, and they want to be out playing, so we're allowing them to do that and come in and play. But we're also teaching them not just about Shakespeare but about performance, writing, and history."

"So this is a fun way for them to continue learning and we package it in a fun summer way."

The museum has done many workshops for children over the years but took a break during the height of COVID. This is the first time workshop since the start of the pandemic, she said.

"It's a fun way to get them into the museum, involved and learning," Scovil said. "This is something we're going to continue doing. Shakespeare is not just some past way of writing and thinking. It's not just old history. It's relevant to today."

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