

St. John's, Kenmore, students consider literary award

KENMORE — First- and second-graders at St. John the Baptist School took on the role of literary critics as they participated in a “mock” Caldecott Award selection process in library class. The Caldecott Award, sponsored by the Association for Library Services to Children, a division of the American Library Association, honor the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.

St. John's librarian, Gina Szczodrowski, led the students in learning about the history of the Caldecott Award, which dates back to 1937. The award was named after Randolph Caldecott, a 19th-century English illustrator. In order to qualify for the award, a book must have been published in the United States in the year prior to the awards ceremony and the illustrator must be a citizen or resident of the United States.

After learning about the history and qualifications for the Caldecott Award, students examined books that



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Second-grader Harjot Kaur at St. John the Baptist School in Kenmore evaluates a possible Caldecott Award winner.

have won in the past, noting qualities in the illustrations that set these

books apart from other illustrations in books that they have read. The

students drew on their knowledge of color, texture, movement and design that they have learned in their weekly art class to assist them in this process.

Szczodrowski set up a “mock” Caldecott Award selection process, setting out nine children's books published in 2018 for the children to look through and judge. Each class voted on and selected an award-winning book and a runner-up honor book. After making their selections, this year's Caldecott Award winner, “Hello Lighthouse,” written and illustrated by Sophie Blackall, was revealed to each class.

“Students were excited to find out that one of the books they analyzed actually won,” Szczodrowski said.

This exercise allowed the students to understand real-world examples of the importance of what they learn in the classroom. St. John's is committed to developing a lifelong love of reading in its students and exploring high-quality literature allows this to happen.