



Greenrock Writer's Retreat

Facilitated by
Red Cedar Writing Project Teacher Consultants

Audience

Greenrock Writers' Retreat serves 9th-12th grade Michigan high school students. Most participants are from the Greater Lansing area, however some students travel from as far away as Rochester Hills and Birmingham, Michigan. In 2011, twenty high school students representing fourteen school districts attended Greenrock.

Funding

Greenrock receives financial support from Red Cedar Writing Project (RCWP), Michigan State University's site of the National Writing Project. Although Greenrock requires a registration fee to cover the cost of lodging, food, materials, mentor texts, camp T-shirts, and facilitator stipends, RCWP provides logistical support and covers all additional costs. Michigan State University absorbs facility costs (such as computer labs and classrooms).

Objectives

Greenrock's mission is to engage students in critical thinking, creative writing, and active learning. The project directors seek not only to enhance students' writing skills, but also their commitment to writing as a personally and professionally meaningful act. These objectives are addressed through a variety of activities including a book (mentor text) study, daily writing and writing response time, attendance at one of the Theatre Department's Summer Circle productions, reader response opportunities, visits to a range of university facilities and landmarks, and the publication of a group anthology.

Our goals are to

- Teach students methods through which they are better prepared to use their imaginations and write creatively as well as self-critically
- Introduce and/or enhance students' abilities to engage in the writing process from idea generation through editing and publication
- Critically examine high quality writing in mentor texts and learn to "read like a writer"
- Practice writing in various styles and forms

Description

Each summer Greenrock teachers invite high school students to participate in a four-day retreat that has a unique and exciting theme. The 2011



theme, "play," included a close reading of the New York Times bestseller *Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins. The teachers demonstrated a writer's ability to think creatively about plot, characterization, and language choices, and to enjoy the writing process by "playing around" or experimenting with a multitude of writing styles.

Students arrive Thursday evening and stay on MSU's campus with facilitators until Sunday afternoon, experiencing the excitement of campus living. During daily field trips, students will visit MSU gardens, the infamous MSU Dairy Store, and even leave their mark on MSU by painting the legendary MSU rock! All of these adventures provide inspiration for student writing. At the end of the weekend, each participant selects a piece of writing for publication in a group anthology. Year after year, students return to form new bonds, reconnect with old friends, and continue to expand their knowledge and skills as a writer. When teenagers comment on Greenrock they say time and again, "One weekend is never long enough!"

Outcomes

All Greenrock students complete exit surveys, and

- 100% of participants believe that writing is important and their love for writing increased due to their experience at Greenrock.
- 98% agreed that their knowledge of the writing process and writing skills have improved
- 100% (of new participants) had never published their own writing before attending Greenrock.

Further studies are forthcoming on the correlation between attending Greenrock and college preparation.

For more information,

Email: greenroc@msu.edu; Visit <http://rcwp.msu.edu/>
or Call Stephanie Geiger, (517) 432-7236

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