Written by Richard Martin
Friday, 14 October 2011 10:22

What is a bee garden? How do I make one? Why would I want to make one? Two Rivermont seniors would like to answer these questions for you (and for children throughout the Quad City community!) – and they'd like to do it with a loveable bee named Buzzie! Pavane Gorrepati and Ramya Prabhu, seniors at Rivermont Collegiate, are presenters at the 2011 David R. Collins Children's Literature Festival, to be held October 25th at the River Center. Pavane and Ramya are the author and illustrator of A Buzzie Bee Tale, a picture book about Buzzie Bee, his friend Lily Lilliput, and their efforts to help Buzzie Bee's friends and family, whose environment has been affected by climate change.

Pavane and Ramya are dedicated, passionate students balancing a rigorous academic class load with a variety of extracurricular pursuits. Pavane, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Krishnarao Gorrepati of Davenport, founded the Rivermont Environmental Club, has earned the title of "Eco-Ambassador" from the Weather Channel, and was awarded the President's Environmental Youth Award. Pavane was recently named a Commended Student in the 2012 National Merit Scholarship Program and spent the summer doing research in China on a 2-month World Food Prize Borlaug-Ruan International Internship. Ramya, daughter of Dr. & Mrs. N.V. Rama Prabhu of Moline, serves as secretary and treasurer of the Rivermont Environmental Club and is a member of the National Honor Society and Student Council. In addition, Ramya is a gifted artist and accomplished violinist.

Given the variety of other pursuits you both have, what inspired you to add another project to your plate with A Buzzie Bee Tale? Pavane, an avid proponent for the environment, feels that education is one of the most important aspects of environmental conservation, particularly at a young age. Her goal was to start with educating children in her own community and grow from there. Inspiration for character and setting illustrations came to life for Ramya as she read Pavane's story.

What are some favorite reactions to the book? Pavane knew she had worked with the right illustrator when one child decided they wanted Buzzie Bee as their friend! Another favorite reaction, of course, is when children decide they want to build their own bee garden after reading the story.

How did you get started writing and illustrating? Pavane remembers writing books and sharing them with her class as early as second grade. Ramya collaborated with fellow Rivermont student Christopher Mbakwe (Class of 2011) on illustrations for the 2011 comic-book-themed yearbook. Her illustrations are also used in media for several groups she's involved in,

including Rivermont's Student Council, National Honor Society, and Environmental Club.

What advice do you have for other students interested in writing and illustrating? Pavane recommends young writers pick their passion, because it will truly shine through in their pages. Ramya urges illustrators to try out different styles and move beyond their comfort zone - not always stick with what they've done before – she herself is now doing just that!

What will you be doing at The David R. Collins Children's Literature Festival later this month? Pavane and Ramya will be explaining to students their writing, illustrating, and publishing process for A Buzzie Bee Tale, as well as reading parts of the book aloud.

Where can A Buzzie Bee Tale be purchased? The book is available for sale at www.lulu.com and copies will be available for sale at the festival. In addition, Pavane and Ramya are in the process of getting the book for sale on Amazon.com.

The David R. Collins Children's Literature Festival, presented by the Midwest Writing Center and the Davenport Public Library, will feature Newbery Award winner Clare Vanderpool, author of Moon Over Manifest, as well as a variety of other exciting authors and illustrators. The festival is named after its founder, a beloved author and Moline teacher who passed away in 2001. David founded the festival in 1978 to encourage future generations of readers and writers by exposing them to the authors and illustrators behind the books they read.

Rivermont Collegiate, located in Bettendorf, is the Quad Cities' only private, independent, nonsectarian college prep school for students in preschool through 12th grade.

For additional information on Rivermont Collegiate, contact Brittany Marietta at (563) 359-1366 ext. 302 or marietta@rvmt.org
and visit us on the web at
www.rvmt.org

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For additional information on the David R. Collins Children's Literature Festival, visit www.midwestwritingcenter.org

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