



## A G.A.T.E.WAYS JOURNEY PROGRAM

for gifted Year 3 and 4 children with a love

of language, literature and writing

### Calling all Wordsmiths and Wonderers

...writing with courage and compassion

**G.A.T.E.WAYS** is an independent organization established in 1994, which offers challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. This *JOURNEY* for both girls and boys will run over four mornings.

How important is it to fit in? How important is it to be kind?

Do you love a story that's really real? One that makes you cry, makes you think about fitting in or being left out, allows you to see your life differently? In *Wonder*, we meet Auggie who goes to school for the first time at age ten. Auggie has a severe facial disfigurement but keeps his sense of humour and shows us how important it is to be yourself, no matter how you may be teased or left out. Come explore *Wonder* and create your own powerful story that will include four powerful literary techniques used in *Wonder*: writing chapters from different characters' points of view (multiple perspectives), using other texts in your story (intertextuality), using letters, text messages, and diaries (epistolary techniques) and using time (flashbacks, in medias res) in fascinating ways. How *wonder-ful*!

#### Session One: Same story, different view

In our first session, we will talk about how a story can be told differently through the eyes and voices of multiple characters. Have you ever read a story like this? How does the first day of school look from Auggie's point of view, or his sister's or his bully's? Auggie's friend Summer says, "I do admit August's face takes some getting used to" and Auggie says, "I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse." We'll brainstorm about what it feels like to be different from other kids and use *Picture This!* cards to help us to describe those feelings and emotions. We'll learn to build really fleshed out characters who jump from the page with distinct voices and characteristics. You'll write a dramatic or funny scene from three very different perspectives to see how changing the point of view changes the tone, emphasis, language and voice. By the end of the session, you will have found a story that you want to tell and have explored a few perspectives that help you tell it.

#### Session Two: Stories within stories

This week, we'll look at all the other stories hiding within *Wonder*. Auggie loves *Star Wars* and author R.J. Palacio includes some ideas from *Star Wars* about good and evil to highlight these themes in her book. Julian dresses up for Halloween as Darth Sidious with a melted face to make fun of Auggie. We are joyful with Auggie when he accepts his medal for greatness and Auggie compares the feeling inside of him to the final scene in *Star Wars* Episode IV when Luke Skywalker, Hans Solo and Chewbacca are being applauded for destroying the Death Star. We'll discover how references to other stories like *The Little Prince*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and *Hamlet* inside *Wonder* create rich layers through awesome analogies (extended comparisons), stunning symbols or inspiring quotations. *Wonder* is full of sayings and quotations that offer wisdom to the characters, such as, "When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind" (Antoine de Saint-Exupery, *The Little Prince*). Dr. Suess asks, "Why fit in when you were born to stand out?" You will be encouraged to find and use some inspirational quotations to strengthen your story. What stories do you love? What songs and poems can you bring in to connect with your readers and make your characters really come alive? Let's put stories within stories and get those texts talking to each other!

#### Session Three: Dear Diary

Have you ever read a story that is written in the form of letters, diaries, texts or emails? Language changes radically with the form, for example, Jack's and Auggie's texts, 'I hope you can 4give me,' yes dude, we'r frenz again' compared to Jack's mother's email apologizing for Jack knocking out Julian's tooth while defending Auggie, "I hope you do accept our offer to pay Julian's dental bills." In this type of writing we hear the clear voices and attitudes of characters, and time is condensed in sharp snapshots. We'll talk about how diary entries are used in a similar way in books like *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* or *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Today we'll play a fast and fun interactive game where we create and answer letters, texts, and post cards from a range of various fascinating characters you make

up in order to develop truly distinct voices for your characters. Emojis, slang and comics are welcome! You will develop and select some of your best material to include in your own story and begin mapping its shape.

#### **Session Four: All in Good Time**

In our last session you'll revise, order and edit your story in a compelling and *wonderful* form. We will take turns using the 'crystal ball' to project futures for your characters and see how you'd like to end your stories. You may choose to play with time starting from the end and working up to the most dramatic scene. You might decide to begin 'in media res', in the middle of the action. You may decide to build the chapters chronologically forward in time or use flashbacks to tell the story. We'll play some storytelling games to come up with the narrative arc that you like the best. We'll share parts of our stories, and following some group feedback, you will have plenty of direction and inspiration to complete your story. We will talk about our best tips for writing and re-writing and even getting published.

**Preparation :** Please read *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio and bring in your copy to the first Journey session. Please make notes in the book (either with a pencil or highlighter) as you're reading it of your favourite parts and mark any quotations from songs and other stories in the novel that you really liked.

**Homework :** There may be some homework set between sessions.

**Follow up:** Within a week of Session 4, students will be required to complete and email their final stories to the presenter for assessment.

#### **What to bring:**

Bring along an exercise book, a pencil case with some pens, pencils, and highlighters, and a snack (no nuts, please). Also bring a small photo of yourself and a stamped, self-addressed DL envelope for the return of your report to Session 1.

#### **About the presenter:**

Rebecca Waese has taught literature and writing to students at La Trobe University and drama to kids at The National Theatre in St. Kilda. She's from Toronto, Canada and now calls Melbourne home, where she lives with her two children and husband. She loves to read, write, act in plays, review theatre and sing. At the moment she's studying hard to finish her MA in Teaching.