

The Poet of Sleepy Hollow

By Jean Follmer

Let it be known to all that Sleepy Hollow Elementary has a published poet in its midst! Third grader Vivian McGowan's poem "I Can Fly" can be found in the January, 2008 issue of Highlights for Children. Vivian penned her poem at age six in Mrs. Hilty's first grade class. Mrs. Hilty instructed her students to write a story called "I Can Fly" and Vivian's story came to life as a free verse poem:

Vivian submitted her poem to Highlights for Children in 2006 and waited nearly two years for it to be published. Upon learning she was a published author, she says "I was proud when I found



Author Vivian McGowan, Sleepy Hollow Elementary 3rd grader

Photo Jean Follmer

I Can Fly

*Swish, flap,
I soar through the sky
like a hawk drifting along.
A soft breeze
goes through the air.
The sun is setting
in a soft pink and orange.
I can see the ocean.
Beyond that I see
a green forest and meadows.
The stars start to shine.
It is night.
The owl begins to hoot.
The bats begin to squeal.
Suddenly I swish around.
I fly home.
It's been a good flight.*

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out." When asked what inspired her to write a poem instead of a story, Vivian said, "I intended for it to be a story and mine turned out to be a poem." Vivian says she likes to write poetry, particularly free verse. Sleepy Hollow Elementary has a strong focus on their writing program, so Vivian has frequent opportunities to work on her poetry in school. Vivian also enjoys sketching and reading. Reading is her favorite subject in school. "I like reading Goosebumps and Nancy Drew" says Vivian. She wants to be a teacher or a photographer when she grows up.

Sleepy Hollow principal Diane Kanegae says "Vivian has been a lovely addition to our school and has excelled every year. She's rather remarkable in all

areas, she is...unusually articulate for her age. I'm actually thrilled for her." Vivian's parents, Susan Wheatley and Michael McGowan are incredibly proud of their daughter. Ms. Wheatley said "Mrs. Hilty was very enthusiastic about the writing program." She appreciates that Sleepy Hollow is "teaching kids at an early age that they can really be creative and be authors." Mr. McGowan proudly carries a copy of Vivian's poem with him every day in his briefcase.