

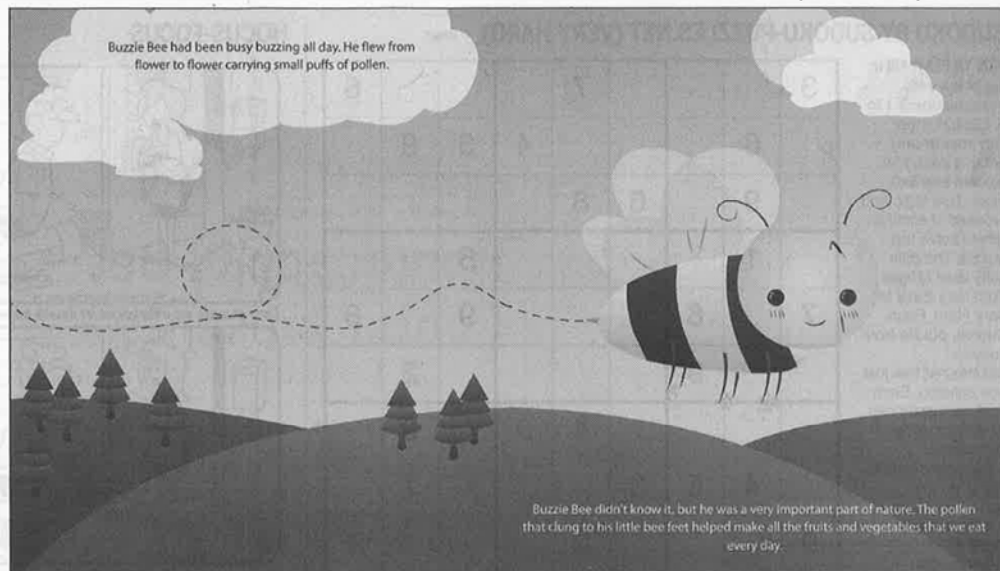


DAVID R. COLLINS CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FESTIVAL



Rashah McChesney/QUAD-CITY TIMES

Pavane Gorrepati, left, and Ramya Prabhu, both seniors at Rivermont Collegiate in Bettendorf, sit in a small garden on the school's campus. Gorrepati wrote a book titled "A Buzzie Bee Tale" that Prabhu then illustrated. The two will be presenting their book at the David R. Collins Children's Literature Festival today at the Davenport RiverCenter.



Buzzie Bee had been busy buzzing all day. He flew from flower to flower carrying small puffs of pollen.

Buzzie Bee didn't know it, but he was a very important part of nature. The pollen that clung to his little bee feet helped make all the fruits and vegetables that we eat every day.

CONTRIBUTED ART

Ramya Prabhu, a Rivermont Collegiate senior, did the illustrations for the children's book "A Buzzie Bee Tale," which was written by fellow Rivermont senior Pavane Gorrepati.

Rivermont students author, illustrate children's book on bees

Rashah McChesney | Posted: Tuesday, October 25, 2011 2:00 am

Pavani Gorrepati wants to change the way people treat the environment.

The 17-year-old Rivermont Collegiate senior thinks the best way to do so is by educating children.

So, alongside classmate Ramya Prabhu, she published "A Buzzie Bee Tale," a children's book about a bee that enlists the help of a child to clean up its own environment.

It took about five months of writing and drawing between the two to produce the 48-page tale and publish it in May of this year.

"I thought it would be a great way to just inspire kids early on," Gorrepati said. "I thought this was a great place to start. You can reach kids on a very basic level and also teach them more."

In the book, Buzzie Bee returns home from a day of pollinating flowers to find all of the other bees in his hive looking sick and then finds a friend named Lily Lilliput who builds a bee garden to rehabilitate the insects.

Gorrepati said she doesn't have a particular affinity for bees, but she does have an ongoing passion for the environment. And as major pollinators of flowering plants, bees have a huge impact on ecosystems and the world's food chain.

"I studied more about bees at the local library, the Bettendorf Public Library, and I looked for online resources and nonprofit organizations to help conserve bees' habitats," she said. "They've had a major decline in recent years. A major part of that is because of destruction of their habitat."

Gorrepati and Prabhu have plans to build a bee garden on the Rivermont campus as part of the school's Environmental Club activities this academic year.

The book has already made its way to an international audience since Gorrepati took it to Chinese elementary schools over the summer while conducting research at the China National Hybrid Rice Research and Development Center.

"I was able to show them what I did and it was simple enough sentences that they were able to understand the English," she said. "So it was great to see that because it's not just something we can put in Iowa. It can be a global and national thing."

While Gorrepati's parents were not surprised at their then-16-year-old's dedication to writing a book, Prabhu managed to do just that with her family.

"I've been doing a lot of little illustration and comic work since fifth or sixth grade and my parents didn't really know about that until I started making this," Prabhu said. "They were just really surprised and I guess excited that I could do something like this, so they were pretty happy about it."

The two will present their book today at the David R. Collins Children's Literature Festival, which is being held for about 700 third- through sixth-graders at the Davenport RiverCenter.

They'll be talking to the youngsters about how to go about publishing a book.

"It's really something that we want to teach the kids at the writers conference that no matter how young you are, there's always a way that you can make a difference," Prabhu said. "We did that through making this book."

The book, which will be on sale for \$20 at the festival, has sold well, and the two Rivermont seniors decided that the profits will go to the American Bee Federation.

"What's the point of keeping the profits to ourselves?" Gorrepati said. "We want to help the cause, and it's the perfect way to educate and do a great thing for bees."