

R. Friend's character based assembly begins as the children walk in with Ronda at the piano singing and teaching the students an original song - *Love you to the Moon and Back* (if the school has a family night this song will be performed by the students). After comically introducing the Friend Family - including the undercover angel - Grandma Brombaugh - her brother - *Mr. World Book Encyclopedia* - and her sister - *Miss Hawkephant*, Ronda magically turns into her six-year-old self as she acts out the first book *Swallows Her Pride*. Students learn valuable lessons such as, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all!" and an object lesson on learning to swallow your pride using a warm chocolate chip cookie and a glass of ice cold milk. Ending that portion of the presentation, just like her books, is a cliffhanger that includes her brother getting a piece of turkey caught in his throat. The goal - to entice students to read to know what is going to happen next!

Ronda continues her program with audience participation as enthusiastic teachers and staff come on stage with a hilarious rendition of *Mr. Friend Had a Farm*. Continuing with heartwarming stories of heroes, sunshine baskets, true-to-life pandemonium moments and woolly baaad lies, she then teaches the audience a sign language song entitled *There's No End in Friend*.

Introducing students to a one-of-a kind picture book written as a dual reader in poetry and prose, she embarks on a one actor show and in the end three conniving carnivores head to *Hawg Heaven Farms* to eat the piggies. The scuffle that unfolds in the pigpen only serves to validate the moral of the story - The family that stinks together - sticks together! It is a wonderful lesson on the importance of teamwork.

Ronda shares the heartwarming story behind the story of why her company is called Sunflower Seeds Press. She shares briefly another story behind the picture book that she wrote for a children's hospital entitled *Pass Love Along*. Children will be touched and realize that listening to their heart and mind while being still is just as important as the process of writing and creating itself. A continual thread is borne out: "Love brings hope; love stand strong. Hold onto love - pass love along!"

Ronda concludes the program with either a song she wrote for her mother entitled *Momma, I See Something You Don't See* (two students help with puppets) and or one she wrote for her father, *My Father Loves*. She encourages everyone to be a seed sower no matter what circumstances they are facing. "Sunshine or Rain, Always and Forever, Dare to Dance and Leap for Joy!

The **program lengths** are 45 minutes and with proper acoustics and sound system, Ronda can perform for groups up to 800-1000. Normally schools will split their groups into K-2 for one assembly and 3-5 or 3-6 for another assembly. Middle schools could be one program and/or two sessions with an emphasis on anti-bullying if so desired.

The goal is not only to instill great citizenship and character building but to introduce children to their potential as future storytellers, musicians, authors, teachers, heroes and to use the gifts and talents they have been given to do so!

National Core Art Standards come into play in every facet of Ronda's presentation. There is storytelling, theatre, dance, media and visual arts rolled into one presentation. Creating, performing, responding and connecting makes an R. Friend presentation a family affair - connecting generations, tickling your funny bones and touching your heart.