

'What if I ate a rainbow?'

Girl wins TV essay contest

By **Jana Alexander**
Enterprise writer

EDMONDS – Seated in front of a roomful of her classmates with bright sunshine flowing in through the windows, Rebecca Saunders, 5, crossed her left leg over her right and read aloud from her first published book, "What if I Ate a Rainbow."

"And if I ate a rainbow, it would soak into my hair. And I would shake with fear because of what was up there," Saunders said.

Rebecca is the first place winner in the kindergarten category of the KCTS Television's Reading Rainbow Young Writers and Illustrators contest. She and Anna Malametz, a student at Madrona K-8 who won first-place in the third-grade category (see related story, page 9), were chosen from a total of 1,100 entries.

After reading her book to the class, Rebecca acted as the snack host, in charge of calling on students to pick up their snack trays.

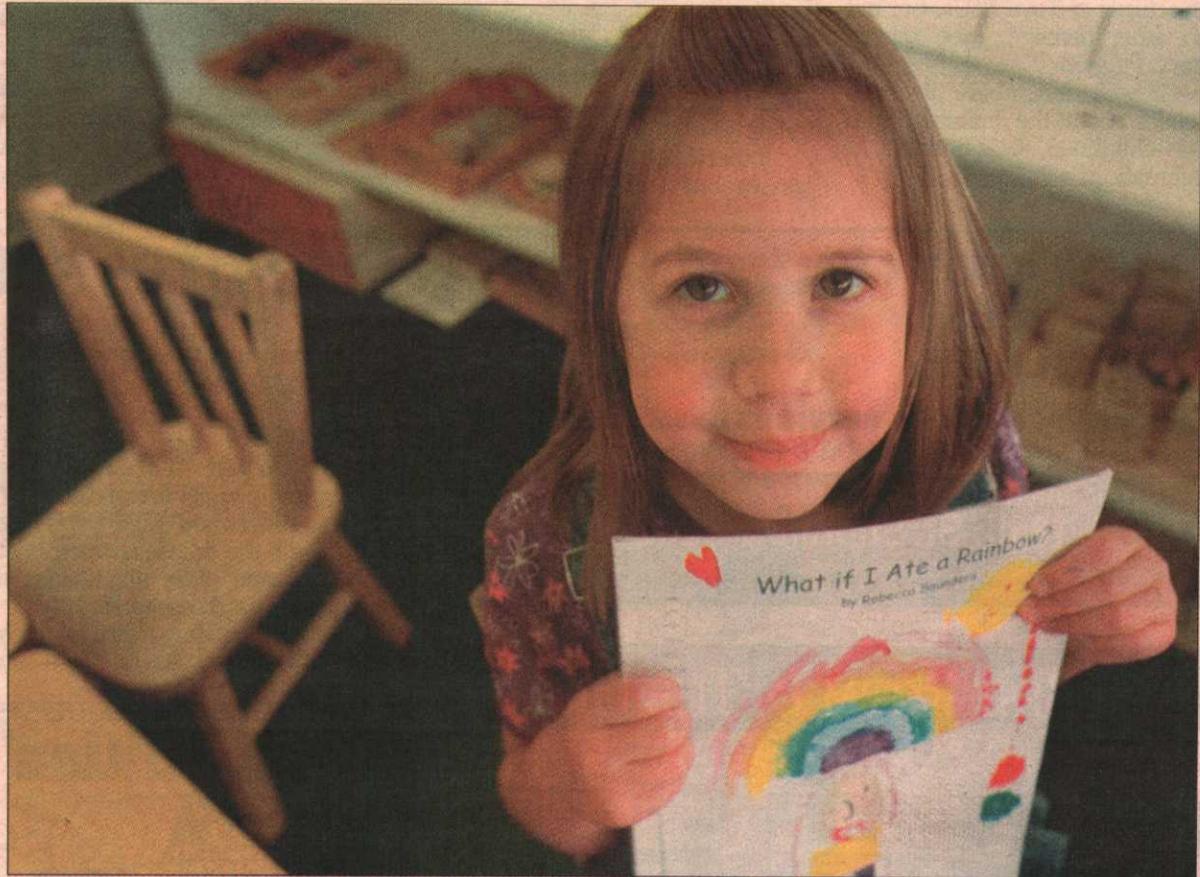
"I like your short pants," Rebecca told one of her classmates.

Time was also set aside for an interview with the young author.

She stood next to a kindergarten-sized chair during an interview, moving one foot on its wooden seat. She said the story for her first book "just came into my head." She said she likes reading, especially Dr. Seuss books.

"I was reading one just a while ago," she said matter-of-factly.

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Enterprise/**DUSTY LOCKE**

Rebecca Saunders, a 5-year-old at Edmonds Montessori School, recently won an award from KCTS 9 for her book "What if I Ate a Rainbow?"

RAINBOW

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She said writing a book and illustrating each page with water-color pictures was quite a task.

"It was a lot of work," she confirmed.

But the work hasn't stopped her from continuing her writing craft. When asked if she would ever write another book, she said, "I already did. (It's called) Rebecca's A, B, C Book."

She said when she found out she won, "I felt proud of myself."

So did her parents, Rob and Darcie Saunders.

"We're just very proud of her," her father said with a gentle smile.

They have read to Rebecca a lot, repeatedly reading her favorite Dr. Seuss selections about feet and A, B, C's. Now, Rebecca has taken over the task and even reads to children in her kindergarten classroom at the Edmonds Montessori School.

"She's been reading for six months or so," her mother said.

Her kindergarten teachers aren't a bit surprised.

Bob and Judy Behen, partners in life and the Montessori classroom, are impressed with Rebecca's quick learning. But that drive is what Montessori seeks to

encourage.

"Montessori children usually learn at a very fast rate and at an early age," Judy said.

The goal in their classroom is to set up "the environment so that they are exposed to things" and can choose to learn them at their own pace.

Children can work on what they want to and sit where they want. They mingle in a multi-age classroom. Oftentimes, children sit all together and "they're all doing different things," Judy said.

"I look at it as a smorgasbord," Bob said.

He said that in some programs, where activities are more structured, Rebecca's skills could go unnoticed at first.

"In some programs, if a child like this came in they wouldn't even know they could do this for the first six months," Bob said.

The result of Montessori's intellectually free environment is quick learning, they say.

"We have a lot of readers in here right now," Bob said. But, he said, "Rebecca is exceptional, of course."

Madrona girl wins writing contest for third graders

By **Jana Alexander**
Enterprise writer

EDMONDS - When Anna Malametz won first place in the third-grade category of the KCTS Television's Reading Rainbow Young Writer's and Illustrators contest, she said she felt "excited."

Her book, "My Dog's a Chef," is about a dog named David.

"The name of the dog that she used is actually her father's name," said Jill Malametz, Anna's mom. "...He's a really good cook."

Anna, who attends Madrona, said she's not sure how she came up with the idea for the book, but said, "I like to cook with my dad."

And she has three dogs at home.

In the story, Anna comes downstairs one night to get a

midnight snack and sees her dog cooking.

"The next morning, everybody thought I made breakfast," Anna said.

Then at school, she is told over the intercom that David is at school and dogs aren't allowed there.

"Six days later, we found out why he was sitting at the front door. It was because he was the cook at school," Anna said.

Anna is already working on her next writing endeavors. One is a joke book. The second is called "A Pony for School."

Anna's mother said her daughter has always loved to write. When both parents found out their daughter had won a first-place award for "My Dog the Chef" it was a great feeling.

"We were very excited and very proud of her," she said.