

Picture this!

Herald/Review photographer gives a lesson through the lens

By Monique Brand
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Copper Queen Library Summer Reading Program participant Ashley Kniffen, 14, interacts with an interviewee while she endeavors to write a story about them at the Bisbee Senior Center Wednesday. This week's Summer Reading Program has the children interviewing, photographing and writing a short biography about a senior.

Photo by Mark Levy

BISBEE — New York native Sylvia Anable had her work cut out for her Wednesday afternoon when she experienced a mini-press conference with three “journalists-in-training.”

During an intense 10 minutes of questioning, journalists discovered Anable’s favorite place is Tokyo, Japan. She married the love of her life and would like to be known for her patience and generosity in the community.

“Wow, that was new,” Anable said with a smile. “I never experienced that before.”

The Q&A session was part of the Copper Queen Library’s summer reading program, where weekly participants set out on various field trips and learn “how to build a better world.”

More than a dozen children participated at the Bisbee Senior Center on Wednesday along with several seniors.

Longtime Herald/Review Photographer Mark Levy offered up his technical experience on how to be a photojournalist.

Last year, Levy received recognition from the annual Arizona Press Club Photojournalism Awards in both the metro and community categories. He was awarded third place in the portrait category for his photo, “Arizona Horseman’s Challenge.” The photo also placed second in the portrait category. And in that same category, his photo, “Illustrated Man” received an Award of Excellence.

Levy also won first place in the general news category for his photo, “Adoption.”

“The main idea is to capture the story both on the page and in the photo,” Levy said. “Make sure you convey what exactly is happening without giving up too much.”

The young journalists started the inquiry by asking their subjects about everything from where they were born to their immediate families.

They also used smartphones to capture the interviewees.

Nancy Perry was born on July 19, 1950 and traveled all over the world as a child. The kids photographed her — with the help of Levy — holding one of her favorite books.

“These kids really knew their stuff,” Perry said.

Pre-teens Kai Avant and Joey Arizmendi interviewed senior center member, Willy Smith. They found out the United Kingdom native wanted to be a fireman as a child and hoped to be remembered as a nice person with good looks.

“I never married — you can call me an old bachelor,” Smith laughed.

The kids decided to capture Smith differently than the rest of the group — through drawing.

When they were finished, they showed Smith.

“This is great,” he said. “I’m grateful for the opportunity (to be interviewed).”

At the end of the lesson, some of the kids pondered about whether they could see themselves as a photojournalist.

“I don’t know, it seems awfully hard,” said 14-year-old Ashley Kniffen.

Eight-year-old Mary Dunley said she would like to be a broadcast journalist someday.

“Maybe a newspaper lady...I don’t know yet,” she said.

Alison Williams, the library’s assistant program coordinator, said that Wednesday’s event marks the start of “The Biography Project” — an initiative where members of the community can share their life stories in book form and residents can check them out at the library.

“We will not officially seek out people until the fall,” she said.

For more information on the project or the summer reading program, call 520-432-4232.



Summer Reading Program participants prepare to photograph their subject, Sylvia Anable, after interviewing her at the Bisbee Senior Center. The reading program participants are, from left, Camila Cates, 11, Anable, Raylan Joerger, 11, and Mikaela Keats, 13.

Photo by Mark Levy