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Award-Winning Children’s Author and Illustrator Brings Unique Perspective on Art and Diversity to Crook County Schools

R. Gregory Christie will join Crook County students over nine virtual events this week

(Prineville, Oregon) – Thanks to \$11,000 in grants from Facebook’s Prineville Data Center, students in the Crook County School District will enjoy live presentations this week from nationally-known author R. Gregory Christie. Mr. Christie is best known for illustrating children’s books, his lectures on art, and creating animated films that can be seen on Netflix and HBO.

The virtual events kick off Tuesday, April 20th and run through the afternoon of Thursday, April 22nd. Mr. Christie plans to cover a variety of topics for students in 2nd through 12th grades:

- Art will be the theme for elementary students through Christie’s book, [*Mousetropolis*](#), which is the story of a city mouse visiting his cousin in the country.
- 5th graders will learn about hope and joy in difficult circumstances through a poetic, nonfiction story called [*Freedom in Congo Square*](#).
- Middle school students will hear about the true story of Bass Reeves who escaped slavery to become the first African American Deputy U.S. Marshal west of the Mississippi in a book titled [*Bad News for Outlaws*](#).
- Middle and high school language arts students will learn how to enhance their writing by answering the question: “What makes a story good enough to illustrate?”

According to Mr. Christie’s website: “His lectures on art, diversity, and literature are family friendly and he has made it his mission to educate and connect audiences to books in a way that is both fun and engaging. Not only does he lecture at conferences and libraries, he also teaches after school art programs all over the country, enabling creative kids to have an early exposure to a world of beauty, wonder, and opportunity.”

The grants from Facebook are designed to enhance the diversity of books in school libraries and provide opportunities for students to learn about the history and people of other races and cultures. Last fall,

the school district bought 75 new books that were spread across every school, with a focus on African-American authors or illustrators. Every student that participates in one of the virtual events this week will take home a new book written or illustrated by Mr. Christie.

Crook County Middle School Librarian Kris Jones spearheaded this year's author visit. As a former Agricultural Science teacher in Central Oregon, she understands the importance of giving local students the opportunity to learn about the world beyond their own neighborhoods and ranches.

"Libraries lead the cause in providing young people with a wide range of information, and we need to keep books and reading materials appealing and relevant. We also want our children to be informed about the broader world and ensure that our minority students have access to books that relate to their own cultures and family backgrounds," explained Crook County Middle School Librarian Kris Jones.

For more information on R. Gregory Christie, visit his website: <https://www.rgregorychristie.com/>

About Crook County School District

Crook County School District is a thriving, rural, growing district in Central Oregon, serving more than 3,000 students from all across Crook County. It is an organization with integrity, a model for educational success, and a recognized leader for excellence in helping students dream, learn, and succeed.

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