

## Superintendent Highlight of the Week

January 31, 2014

This week I had an opportunity to share a unique experience with students in Mr. Paskal's and Mrs. Morales' 4th Grade Class at Stratford Road School as they visited with international opera singer, Juanita Faulkner. Ms. Faulkner's visit was part of the Symphony Space program that is provided to all grade four students at Stratford Road. The program integrates Social Studies, English Language Arts, Engineering, Art and Music. This experience allows classes to be visited multiple times throughout the year by different artists and students take trips to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Symphony Space Theater.



Ms. Faulkner's visit began with her sharing her own heritage (born of parents from the West Indies). There was then a discussion of types of current music; specifically those that have roots in Africa. This led into a discussion of slavery. The students were fascinated as Ms. Faulkner used her musical talents to make history come alive. She demonstrated how slaves used music as code to plan escape routes to the North, to pass the time when working, and to show their feelings. She performed several Negro Spirituals before having the students partnered off to participate in a combination song/dance relevant to the time of slavery. I of course joined in with the singing and dancing and had loads of fun with the students.

The visit concluded with an assignment from Ms. Faulkner. The students will be working in cooperative groups to write and perform their own raps. The topic of the raps will be events in history that the children have been studying. Selected raps will be performed by the students on their trip to the Symphony Space Theater in NYC. This was an excellent way to integrate the Arts with our Social Studies curriculum. A good time was had by all!!!