

POPULAR AUTHOR RELATES TO STUDENTS AT NORTHWEST

BY CHANEL DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE

Before he joined dozens of other noted authors at the Bookmarks Festival of Books, G. Neri stopped by Northwest Middle School on Friday, Sept. 5 to give sixth and seventh graders some insight into what makes him tick.



Angel Solis



Snyder

"All of my books are inspired from real life. A real life place or a real person or something that I come across that I never knew about. I feel overwhelmed to share this story with the rest of the world," he said. "I feel like anything that I make up cannot compare to real life."

The Tampa, Fla.-based author is a star in the young adult fiction genre. His many awards and accolades include the American Library Association's Coretta Scott King Honor Award, and titles like "Chess Rumble," "Yummy," "Ghetto Cowboy" and "Hello, I'm Johnny Cash" have sold briskly. He mainly sets his stories in the intercity, with young people of color as the heroes and heroines.

Neri told students he researches before writing, often visiting various locations and riffling through assorted bits of history. He said he is never daunted by challenges – be they literary or in life.

"If you take a chance and risk something, something incredible may happen," he said. "I'm always about saying 'yes' to experiences, especially when someone tells me I shouldn't do it. Those are the best



Photos by Chanel Davis

G. Neri speaks at Northwest Middle.

places to go. Always say 'yes' to experiences because you never know what might come of it. Don't say 'no' because that's easy; say 'yes' because that's interesting."

Angel Solis, 11, was among the Neri fans in audience. He's read several of his titles and is hopeful that school librarian Ronetta Snyder will stock more of his books. Angel says Neri's style of fiction appeals to him.

"I like how his stories are based off of real-life events. I know some authors who will only do fiction out their minds, not real life events," he said.

Snyder said Neri's popularity among teens and pre-teens was

why she choose him to come to the school from among the many other children's and young adult authors who took part in Bookmarks' Author In Schools program.

"I have noticed that our students that are struggling with literacy and our ESL (English as a Second Language) students gravitate towards the graphic literature. So, I asked that Bookmarks send an author that they can relate to and get them more interested in reading," she said.

Neri's themes are also quite relevant, she added.

"We do talk about anti-bullying, and there are gangs in Winston-Salem," Snyder said.



A view of some of the garden beds at Simon's Community Gardens.

'Garden Day' event is Saturday

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Simon's Community Gardens – a project of the Simon Green Atkins Community Development Corp. – will host a Community Garden Day Celebration on Saturday, Sept. 20 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at The Enterprise Center, 1922 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

The CDC provides garden space for many churches, neighborhood groups and other organizations at The Enterprise Center. Saturday's event will celebrate the wonder of fresh produce while promoting both the community garden and garden-to-plate concepts.

Activities for kids, cook demonstrations and a salsa dish contest are on tap for the free event. Guests may enter their salsa recipes in the contest starting at 11:30 a.m.; judging will start at 12:30 p.m. Each contestant must present a hand written/typed recipe to the judges along with his or her entry.

Acclaimed chef Don McMillian will be among the judges. He will also lead cooking demonstrations from noon – 1:30 p.m. Guests are also invited to bring their favorite summer dish for a potluck feast and recipes to share with other attendees.

Another highlight will be an appearance by award-winning chef Nikki Miller-Ka, who will give cooking demonstrations from 10:30 a.m. – noon. Miller-Ka, who writes her own food blog, has gained recent notoriety for the \$20 Challenge at the City's Dixie Classic Fair Farmers Market. Each week, Miller-Ka whips up a delectable meal using only \$20 worth of products purchased from market vendors.

For more information, call 336-734-6900 or go to facebook.com/simonscommunitygardens.



Miller-Ka

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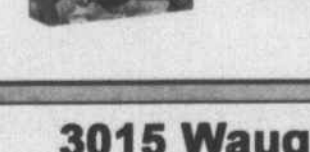
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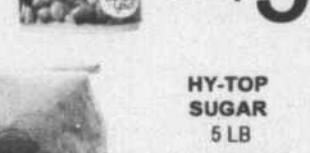
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