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Acalanes Alumni Signs Books at Storyteller

By Sophie Braccini



Elise Broach (right, sitting) signs books for Susan Karr (center) and her two children Samantha and Kevin Wall Photo Sophie Braccini

she says.

Broach describes writing as a very early calling. "I loved to write from the time I was very young," she said, "I made my first picture book when I was in 1st grade. My teachers and school librarians were a huge influence on me because they were always so supportive of my work."

Broach lived in England before moving to Lafayette where she went to Acalanes. "At Acalanes, I was very involved on the Aklan Yearbook staff, and made friends with other budding writers who went on to do it professionally," remembers Broach, "my friend Ann Christie is a published poet and teaches college writing classes. I'm still in touch with one of my English teachers from Acalanes, Carolyn Meek, who was a wonderfully encouraging and insightful critic of my work. She left teaching to run the Lafayette Book Store for many years, and has been a lovely advocate of my books."

Books by Elise Broach include "Shakespeare's Secret," "Masterpiece," "When Dinosaurs Came with Everything" and "Wet Dog!"

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Elise Broach is a successful children literature author who lives in Connecticut. But her busy life doesn't keep her from coming back every year to Lafayette to visit her parents, some old friends and sign books at the children's book store, "The Story Teller."

On July 21, she sat quietly in the bookstore, waiting with a smile for readers to come by and ask for an autograph. Some were already there waiting for her.

Samantha Wall, an Acalanes student, had her copy of "Shakespeare's Secret" ready for signature. Her mother, Susan Kaar who teaches drama at Pleasant Hill Middle School, is a great fan of Broach. "Those are terrific books," she said, "they are wonderful read aloud for younger children and great fun for teenagers." Kaar particularly likes the fact that the author gives credit to her readers for having intelligence, "her use of words is wonderful," she added, "and the plots are clever and enriching."

Broach holds a Ph.D. in American history and uses her knowledge in her stories. "When you study history, the plots and characters are provided for you... you just have to find your own angle on the events you're describing,"