

## **TOMÁS AND THE LIBRARY LADY**

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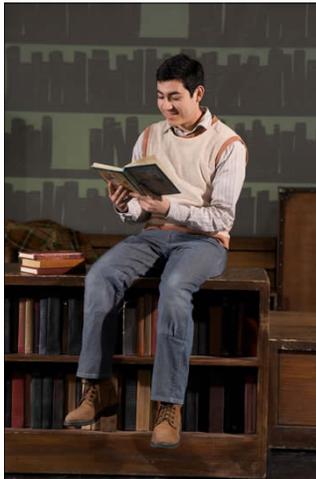
*Applause Series Curriculum Guide*  
November 7 & 8, 2013



# TOMÁS AND THE LIBRARY LADY

## Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Tomás and the Library Lady*! Adapted from the book by Pat Mora and based on a true story, *Tomás and the Library Lady* chronicles the experience of a young boy whose family travels from Texas to Iowa to work as seasonal farm laborers. In Iowa, he forms a friendship with the local librarian who encourages Tomás's love of stories and reading. He in turn teaches her Spanish. Their friendship feeds them both and inspires in Tomás a new found self-confidence. That self-confidence would serve Tomás Rivera well, as he went on to become one of our country's most respected Latino writers and educators.



We thank you for sharing this special experience with your students and hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your in-classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to “pick and choose” material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class's unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

### Support for Des Moines Performing Arts education programs and the Applause Series is provided by:

Alliant Energy, American Republic Insurance Company, Bradford and Sally Austin, Bank of America, Dean and Sandra Carlson, CenturyLink, EMC Insurance Companies, Greater Des Moines Community Foundation, Hy-Vee, John Deere Des Moines Operations, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Richard and Deborah McConnell, Pioneer Hi-Bred - a DuPont business, Polk County, Prairie Meadows, Sargent Family Foundation, Wells Fargo & Co., Willis Auto Campus, Windsor Charitable Foundation, West Bancorporation Foundation and more than 200 individual donors.

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This study guide was compiled and written by Yvette Zarod Hermann and Karoline Myers; edited by Michelle McDonald. Adapted from Childsplay's National Tour Study Guide for *Tomás and the Library Lady*.

# ABOUT DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS



Des Moines Performing Arts is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. It is recognized nationally for excellence as a performing arts center and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

Des Moines Performing Arts presents professional touring productions, including theater direct from Broadway, world-renowned dance companies, family programming, comedy, and concerts.

Education and Community Engagement programs are core to Des Moines Performing Arts' mission as a nonprofit performing arts center.

**Public education programs** allow audience members and local artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on Des Moines Performing Arts' stages. Guest lectures and Q&As with company members allow audiences to explore the inner workings of the performance. In addition, master classes, workshops, and summer camps taught by visiting performers give local actors, dancers, and musicians the chance to increase their skills by working directly with those who know what it takes to succeed on the professional stage.

Through its **K-12 School Programs**, Des Moines Performing Arts strives to ensure that central Iowa students have affordable access to high quality arts experiences as part of their education. More than 50,000 students and educators attend curriculum-connected school matinee performances through the Applause Series annually. In addition, Des Moines Performing Arts sends teaching artists into the schools to provide hands-on workshops and residencies in special opportunities that engage students directly in the creative process. Through its partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center, Des Moines Performing Arts provides teachers with in-depth professional development training on how to use the arts in their classrooms to better impact student learning. The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards is Des Moines Performing Arts' newest initiative to support arts in Iowa schools, providing important learning tools and public recognition to celebrate the achievements of students involved in their high school theater programs.

## DID YOU KNOW?

More than 350,000 people visit Des Moines Performing Arts venues each year.

Des Moines Performing Arts opened in 1979.

Des Moines Performing Arts has three theater spaces:

- *Civic Center, 2744 seats*
- *Stoner Theater, 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

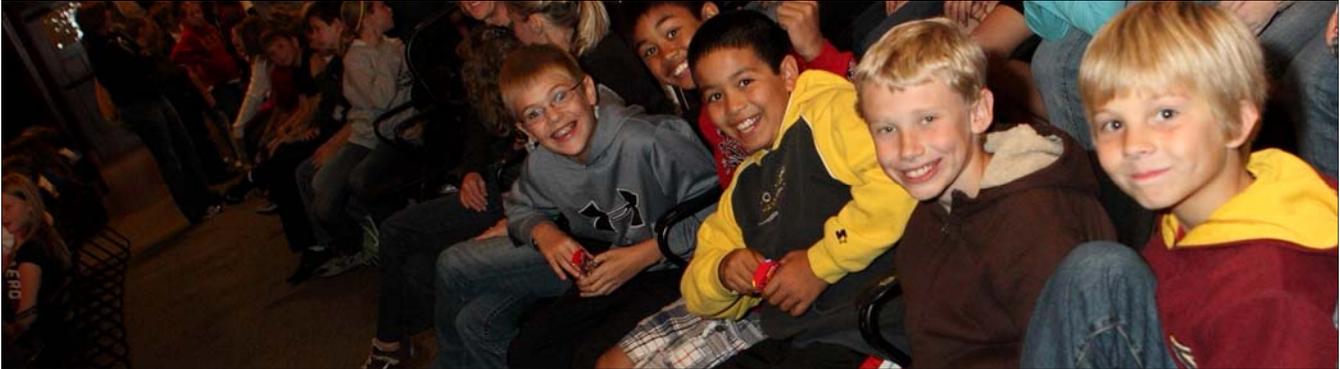
No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Civic Center.

Nollen Plaza, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a park and amphitheater that is also part of Des Moines Performing Arts. The space features the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture by artist Claes Oldenburg.

As a nonprofit organization, Des Moines Performing Arts depends on donor funding to support facilities, programming, and education programs.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 18th season of school performances.

# GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



## YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Lively bands, musicians, and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- \* What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- \* What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- \* What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- \* Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- \* Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

### A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Seeing a live performance is a very special experience. Although it is not required, many people enjoy dressing up when they attend the theater.

## THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the theater:

- \* Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- \* Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- \* Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- \* Do not text during the performance.
- \* Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- \* When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- \* **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound. Other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- \* Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater.
- \* Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- \* Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

# TEMPLE THEATER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION



**Thank you for choosing the Applause Series with Des Moines Performing Arts.  
Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Temple Theater.**

## ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. (Full payment and cancellation policies may be viewed at [DesMoinesPerformingArts.org/education](http://DesMoinesPerformingArts.org/education).)
- DMPA reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Temple for the Performing Arts, and be seated in the theater.
- Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

## DIRECTIONS

- The Temple Theater is located in the Temple for the Performing Arts located at Tenth and Locust Streets in downtown Des Moines.
- Directions from I-235: Take Exit 8A (downtown exits) and the ramp toward Third Street. Travel south on Third Street approximately six blocks to Grand Avenue. Turn west on Grand Avenue and travel to Thirteenth Street. Turn south on Thirteenth Street and then east on Locust Street.
- Buses will park on the south side of Locust Street in front of the Nationwide building. See next column for additional parking information.

### QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department  
at 515.246.2355 or  
[education@DesMoinesPerformingArts.org](mailto:education@DesMoinesPerformingArts.org).  
Thank you!

## PARKING

- Police officers stationed at the corner of Tenth and Locust Streets will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the theater. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking.
- Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show.
- Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the theater. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with DMPA Education staff.

## ARRIVAL

- When arriving at the theater, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes. A staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you.
- DMPA staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible.
- Seating in the theater is general admission. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may determine a group's specific location in the theater.
- We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group**; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seats or taking groups to the restroom.

## IN THE THEATER

- In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher.
- We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- If an item is lost at the Temple Theater, please see an usher or call 515.246.2355.

# VOCABULARY



## THEATER TERMS

**costume:** anything an actor wears to play a character. A hat and glasses are costumes, but a book that an actor carries is not.



**narrator:** a person who tells a story, often as part of a performance or program.

**projection:** images are created that are larger-than-life by projecting light onto a screen.



Projections can be created from the front or the rear of the screen.



*Tomás and the Library Lady* uses projections that look like shadow images.

**shadow image:** a dark image or shape cast on a surface when light is blocked by an opaque object.

## FROM THE SHOW

**migrant worker:** a person who moves from place to place to get work



**Chicano:** a term used to refer to Mexican people who grow up in the United States. Mexican-American or Hispanic are alternative terms that can be used today.

**crops:** agricultural plants or produce. Tomás and his family travel to pick crops, including corn.



**coop:** a farm building or cage for housing small animals, such as chickens.

**borrow:** to take or receive with the intention of returning it.



You can borrow books from a library.

## SPANISH WORDS

**adiós [a-de-os']:** goodbye

**carbón [car-bone']:** coal

**carro [car'-ro]:** car

**cuento [coo-en'-to]:** story

**elote [ay-lo'-tay]:** ear of corn

**escuela [es-co-ay'-lah]:** school

**español [es-pah-nyole']:** Spanish

**luna [loo'-nah]:** moon

**libro [lee'-bro]:** book

**maestra [mah-es'-trah]:** teacher

**mañana [mah-nyah'-nah]:** tomorrow

**¡No entiendo! [no en-tee-en-doh]:** I don't understand!

**pan dulce [pahn dool'-thay]:** sweetbread

**prestar [pres-tar']:** to borrow

**Tejas [te-has]:** Texas

# ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



*Tomás and the Library Lady*, based on the book by Pat Mora, tells the story of writer Tomás Rivera's childhood. It is the story of an unlikely friendship, the power of reading, and the positive influence of role models who support a child's dreams.

**Run Time:** Approx. 60 minutes

## THE SYNOPSIS

Tomás Rivera travels with his Amá (mother), his Apá (father), his Papá Grande (grandfather), and his little brother Enrique from Crystal City, Texas, all the way to Hampton, Iowa, to find work picking corn, spinach and beets. Tomás is haunted by memories of a teacher in his Texas school who punished him for speaking Spanish. His parents worry about him but reassure him that he is smart and talented, and that his Papá Grande thinks he will become a writer or a painter some day.

When the Riveras arrive in Iowa, they discover that their new home is little more than a chicken coop. But the family carries on, getting occasional treats like *pan dulce* (sweet bread) and listening to Papá Grande's stories.

One day Tomás's Amá sends him to the post office, and he discovers the Carnegie Library next door. The Library Lady invites him in and introduces Tomás to books about anything and everything he can possibly imagine. Tomás enthusiastically shares the new stories that he has found with his family, and he and his brother Enrique find other books in the town dump.

Tomás teaches the Library Lady some Spanish, while he becomes more confident in English and realizes that he doesn't need to be afraid of his Nightmare Teacher back in Texas any longer. Then comes the day when Tomás comes to visit the library lady and tells her that he must teach her a sad word in Spanish: *Adiós*.

## THE ACTORS

There are just two actors in *Tomás and the Library Lady*. However, there are many more characters in the play. How do you think they will show all of the characters?

## A TRUE IOWA STORY

This is the inspiring true story of Tomás Rivera, who grew up in a migrant worker family, befriended a librarian in Iowa, and learned to love books and the places they took him. He grew up to become the father of Chicano literature, as well as the Chancellor of the University of California at Riverside. The library there bears the name of the boy who was encouraged to read by a library lady in Iowa.

## BILINGUAL TEXT

Throughout the play, key words or phrases are spoken in both English and Spanish, making *Tomás and the Library Lady* readily understood by both English- and Spanish-speakers.

**"What a fabulous production! I love this story because I think it's just a wonderful story of our country and the opportunities people have."**

—Former First Lady  
Laura Bush

# ABOUT THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE SHOW

*Tomás and the Library Lady* is produced by Childsplay, a professional theater serving young audiences and families based in Tempe, Arizona. Childsplay's mission is to create theater so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the theater.

Read on to learn more about the team at Childsplay and the creative team behind *Tomás and the Library Lady*.



## COMPANY HISTORY

Founded in 1977, Childsplay is a nationally and internationally respected professional theatre company whose chosen audience is children. Their respect for children's intelligence and creativity drives the company to produce new and innovative works by theatre's finest artists.

Founder David Saar recognized during his MFA studies that children could reap great benefits from experiences with professional theater. After graduating, Saar gathered classmates in a 1964 Chevy Impala, and equipped with basic sets and costumes, began performing in local classrooms.

Childsplay has educated and inspired more than four million young people and families. They now serve an average annual audience of 200,000 students, teachers, and families.

## THE CREATIVE TEAM

Take a look at of the creative team behind the show to gain a sense of the many jobs that went into the its creation.

Script, Music, and Lyrics by  
**José Cruz González**

Music Arranged & Performed by  
**Adam Jacobson**

Adapted from the book  
"Tomás and the Library Lady" by  
**Pat Mora**

Directed by  
**David Saar**

Scenic and Costume Design by  
**Holly Windingstad**

Sound and Projection Design by  
**Anthony Runfola**

## MEET THE ACTORS

**Rudy Ramirez** (*Tomás*) is a recent Arizona State graduate, earning a BM in Music Theatre Performance.



Some of his favorite roles include "Batboy" in *Batboy the Musical*, "Henry" in *Next to Normal* and "Linus" in ... *Charlie Brown*. When he's not performing, he also enjoys sketch comedy, Thai food, napping and writing. He is thrilled to be a part of *Tomás & the Library Lady!*

**Elizabeth Polen** (*Library Lady*) is thrilled to be touring with Childsplay on her very first national tour! She was



previously in the local production of *Tomás and the Library Lady*, *The Imaginator's*, *Tomato Plant Girl*, *Miss Nelson is Missing* and *In My Grandmother's Purse*. She performs for other Phoenix theatre companies and works as a teaching artist. In 2011 she became a resident artist with Rising Youth Theatre. She holds a BA in Theatre from Gordon College.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR, PAT MORA



Pat Mora is a picture-book author, biographer, poet, educator, advocate and more. Read on to learn more about Pat Mora's life and work.

## EARLY LIFE

Mora grew up in a city bordering El Paso, Texas. Mora's journey to becoming a writer and poet began by growing up in a house with books.

"I'm a writer because I learned bookjoy early in my life thanks to my mom, aunt, teachers, and librarians," she shares. "Books weave through my life, enriching my days." She is deeply grateful to those who taught her to love and play with words in English y en español.

## BILINGUAL LITERACY

Since her first book for children, *A Birthday Basket for Tía* in 1992, Mora has been a champion for bilingual literacy. Seamlessly incorporating Spanish words into text that is mostly English, Mora's writing often mirrors the natural code-switching speech patterns of children who grow up in bilingual communities.

## INTRODUCING IMPORTANT FIGURES

A number of Pat Mora's picture books are non-fiction about important cultural figures. Writing about Sor Juana Inés (Mexico's most famous poet) and writer Tomás Rivera serves as a way for Mora to introduce them to children, families, teachers, and librarians who might not know these important voices.

## EL DÍA DE LOS NIÑOS/ EL DÍA DE LOS LIBROS

In 1996, Mora learned about the Mexican tradition of celebrating April 30th as *El día del niño* (or the day of the child). She thought, "We have Mother's Day and Father's Day. Yes! We need kids' day too." Mora, however, wanted to use the celebration to connect all children with "bookjoy" — her term for the pleasure of reading.

Today, *Día* (short for *El día de los niños/El día de los libros*) is housed at the American Library Association. It has grown to be an community-based, family literacy initiative. Across the country, libraries, schools, and community organizations plan culminating book fiestas that encourage children and families to read together.

ABOVE: Artwork from the first Día celebration held in Tucson, El Paso, and Sante Fe in 1997. Image courtesy of patmora.com.

## AWARDS

Among her awards are Honorary Doctorates from North Carolina State University and SUNY Buffalo, an Honorary Membership in the American Library Association, a Civitella Ranieri Fellowship to write in Umbria, Italy, and a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Texas at El Paso. She was a recipient and judge of a Poetry Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and a recipient and advisor of the Kellogg National Leadership Fellowships.



# ABOUT MIGRANT WORKERS



Image courtesy of dwd.wisconsin.gov

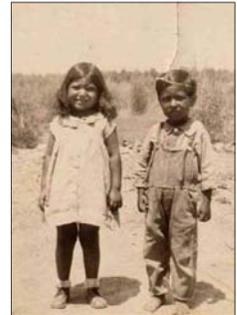
In the 1960s, Tomás and his family moved from Texas in winter to Iowa in summer to pick fruits and vegetables on farms. The family were migrant workers.

## LIVING CONDITIONS

When Tomás was a boy, migrant workers lived difficult lives. They faced discrimination, were paid very little, performed hard physical labor, and often had poor access to education and health care.

## CONDITIONS TODAY

Thanks to Cesar Chavez, the conditions that migrant farm workers face today are much better than when Tomás Rivera was a boy. Cesar's dream was to create an organization to protect and serve farm workers. For more than three decades, Cesar led the first successful farm workers union in American history, achieving dignity, respect, fair wages, medical coverage, and humane living conditions for hundreds of thousands of farm workers.



Cesar Chavez is the six year old boy in this picture, with his sister. Chavez was born on a small Arizona farm and worked hard all his life, first as a laborer, and then as a champion for laborer's rights. Image courtesy of npr.org.

## SEASONAL LABOR

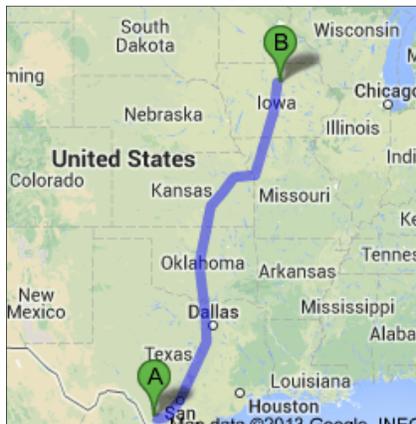
Hired farm workers help provide labor during critical production periods, such as harvesting and planting. Some travel from production area to production area during several months of the year, following the harvest seasons.

### Listen for:

- ◇ What was Tomás's family's home like when they arrived in Iowa?
- ◇ What did Tomás's family think about school? Did everyone in his family have the chance to attend school as a child?

### Think about it:

- ◇ Can you imagine living in two different places every year?
- ◇ Have you ever driven in a car to Texas? It's more than a twenty hour drive. Tomás's family made the trip twice a year with no air conditioning.



RIGHT: Migrant workers in America travel seasonally to places throughout the country. The map to the right shows the path the Rivera family traveled from Texas to Iowa.

# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION

## PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION

1. Tomás learns English as his second language. Does your family speak a language other than English at home? Have you ever been in a situation where you didn't understand the language someone was speaking? How did it make you feel?
2. Tomás develops a special relationship with the librarian. Is there an adult who has influenced your life or shared something special with you?
3. When Tomás reads, his imagination takes him right into the story. If you could become a part of one of your favorite books, which book and what part of the story would it be?
4. Tomás hears many stories from his Papa Grande. What is your favorite story that you like to hear again and again? Why do you think we like to hear stories more than once?
5. When did you first learn to read? What was the first book you read by yourself?
6. Tomás goes to a place that is very different from his home. Have you travelled to another place? What was different about it? What did you like about it?
7. We all have dreams when we sleep. Sometimes they are pleasant and sometimes they are nightmares. Share a dream that you've had. Have you ever had the same dream more than once? Why do you think that happens?
8. Tomás tells the library lady he would like to read about tigers and dinosaurs. What do you want to learn about? Could you learn about any of those things in a book?

**Extension Activity:** Make a list of 5 things that you would like to read about. Ask a parent or teacher to help you find books about your topics and as you read, write down the information you learn in a notebook. Share the information with a family member or friend. Read a little everyday.

## 1) TOMÁS & HIS JOURNAL

**Explanation:** After reading the book *Tomás and the Library Lady*, students will imagine that they are Tomás and write (or dictate) a journal entry from his perspective.

**Goals:** To practice writing skills; to make inferences based on text clues and personal experience; and to more fully imagine a character.

### Activity:

1. Read Pat Mora's *Tomás and the Library Lady* as a class read-aloud.
2. When finished, ask students to pretend that they are Tomás and he is exactly the same age as you. Ask them to imagine that they have been traveling back and forth with their parents from Texas to Iowa every year for as long as they can remember.
3. Ask students to write a journal entry from Tomás's perspective about his life. (For younger students, you may have them dictate the journal entry or draw a picture that they feel represents Tomás's life.)
4. Provide them with prompts such as the following to influence their journal entry:
  - ◇ Do you like to travel to different places?
  - ◇ What is school like?
  - ◇ What do you eat for lunch when you are in the car? What do you eat for breakfast? For dinner? For snack?
  - ◇ What do you do all day while your family is picking fruit or vegetables?
  - ◇ What is your favorite fruit or vegetable? Why?
  - ◇ What's your least favorite fruit or vegetable? Why?
  - ◇ Why do you like stories?
  - ◇ Was there anything about the library or library lady that surprised you? Why?

### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What part of Tomás's life did you choose to write about? What did this aspect of his life interest you?
2. How would you feel if you were Tomás?
3. Are there parts of Tomás's life that you think are similar to yours?

# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION

## 2) EXPLORING STORYTELLING

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will explore the role of storyteller. The teacher will act as the storyteller and students “become” the story by acting out the main role.

**Goals:** Students will use text clues to form a character and demonstrate listening comprehension.

**Activity:**

1. Tell students that you are going to step into the role of storyteller, and they are going to be actors that help tell the story. (Teacher can select appropriate short text or use the story at right.)
2. Ask each student to stand in their own personal space, not close to any furniture, walls or windows. Ask them to concentrate on their imagination and not look around at anyone else. This is called “focus.” Ask them to stay in one spot for the whole story.
3. Tell students that they are going to play the role of the young worker.
4. Tell the story. Monitor students for action that shows their listening and comprehension. If needed, give prompts that help students understand how they can move within their spot to show their participation in the story.
  1. When finished, say “The End” and ask students to return from their imaginations and come back to the classroom.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1. What is a storyteller?
2. What is an actor?
3. What did it feel like to play the part of the young worker?
4. What do you think it feels like to be an actor on stage with an audience watching you?
5. Was the feather magic?
6. All cultures have stories, legends and myths that they share. Stories are told for entertainment, to teach a lesson, to help understand the origin of things or the help understand why things happen. Why do you like stories?

### SAMPLE STORY:

Once there was a young worker who picked vegetables for a living. The strong young worker loved to be in the fields. This young worker would run his fingers through the dirt on the ground. *(Check to see if students are acting along. Encourage them by saying “Now feel the soil.”)*

The smell of fresh Iowa soil was inspiring. One day, the worker stood with his hands on his hips and looked out over the crops and into the beautiful blue sky. He watched a large bird, maybe a hawk or an eagle, fly directly overhead. He thought he saw something shiny fall from the bird’s claw, and was amazed to watch it float down, down, down, slowly, until the shiny thing landed right at his feet! He picked it up. It was a golden feather, and how it sparkled in the light!

The young worker looked around to see if anyone had seen him or the bird. No one was there. He tried to put the feather in the pocket of his overalls, but it kept flying back down onto the ground. He tried three times, *(pause for students)* with no luck.

He held the feather tightly with two fingers, said out loud, “Oh, you silly feather!” *(Pause to let students say their line.)*

The worker wondered to himself: Does this feather think he is a seed? Should I plant him?” The worker bent down, and scooped some earth into his free hand. The feather jumped right into the hole and covered itself up. All you could see was a faint glow coming from the soil. The young worker marked the spot with four small stones so that he could check it every day. The feather never grew into a plant or a bird, but the sun always shone on that spot first after every rainstorm.

# POST-SHOW ASSESSMENT

## POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Comprehension

1. All plays have three P's: People in a Place with a Problem. Where does the play take place? Who are the people? What are the problems? What happens at the beginning of the play? The middle? The end?

### Themes

1. What did the Library Lady learn from Tomás? What are some of examples of ways adults can learn from young people?

2. Tomás had to practice a lot in order to become good at reading and speaking English. What is something you've had to work very hard at?

3. Papa Grande thinks Tomás is going to be a writer or painter someday. What do your parents or grandparents want you to be? What do you want to be?

4. Tomás has a hard time saying goodbye to the Library Lady. Have you ever had to say goodbye to someone who you knew you wouldn't see for a long time? How did you feel?

5. Tomás overcomes his fear of his teacher... what helps him overcome his fear? Have you ever had to overcome something you were afraid of? How did you do it?

### Theater

1. The actors play more than one character. How do they make the characters different from one another?

2. What do you remember about the actors' costumes. Describe them.

3. What was the set like in this show? Were there any elements that you thought worked really well in helping you to imagine the place? Why?

4. This show contained both English and Spanish. Were you able to understand the story, even in parts that were in a language that you may not know? How did you know what the actors were talking about?

## 1) WRITE A LETTER

**Goal:** To reflect on the performance experience and to practice writing skills.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will write a letter about their experience to the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts education donors whose support keeps Applause Series tickets accessibly priced for school groups.

### Materials:

- ◇ Paper
- ◇ Writing utensil

### Activity:

1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students. Use the following discussion questions to guide the conversation:

- ◇ What was the show about?
- ◇ What parts of the show were most exciting?
- ◇ Which character did you enjoy the most? Why?
- ◇ What did the characters learn?

2. Next, invite students to write a letter to the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts donors about their theater experience.

### Example letter starter:

Dear *Tomás and the Library Lady* performers,

My favorite part of the show was...

While watching your show I felt... because ...

I have drawn a picture of the scene when...

If I could be in your show, I would play the part of ... because ...

3. Mail the letters to:

Des Moines Performing Arts  
Attn: Education Department  
221 Walnut Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

### Follow-up Questions:

1. What did you include in your letter? Why did you want to share that particular idea?

# POST-SHOW ASSESSMENT

## 2) STORIES OF HELPERS

**Goal:** To reflect on the theme of helping others

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will write a story about a time that they were helped by someone, similar to how Tomás was helped by the library lady.

**Materials:**

- ◇ Paper
- ◇ Writing utensil

**Activity:**

1. Reflect with students on how *Tomás and the Library Lady* is a true story about a young boy and someone who helped him. As young people, they have probably experienced someone helping them as well.
2. It is now time for students to share their own story.
3. At the top of their paper, they should write the title of their story. The title should be their name followed by the person who helped them. They do not need to know the name of the person. For example, their story could be called “Sam and the Garden Man” or “Emma and the Lady at the Shoe Store.”
4. Students may then write a short story about what they needed help with and how this person helped them. Students should write it in the first person, using the word “I”.
5. When students are finished, invite them to read their story to a partner or the class before leading a discussion about the qualities of their characters.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1. How would you describe the person who helped you?
2. After listening to others’ stories, are the people who helped us similar to one another? How? In what ways are they different?
3. What does it take to help someone?
4. How did you feel when the person helped you?
5. Tomás was helped by the library lady, but he also helped the librarian by teaching her Spanish. Have you ever helped an adult? How did you feel when you helped them?
6. Was the library lady a hero? Why or why not? If so, why do we notice some people such as sports or music figures and others like nurses, school bus drivers, and other important helpers go unnoticed? What can we do celebrate a hero or helper who usually go unnoticed?

## 3) MAP MAKING

**Goal:** To explore United States geography and to reflect on Tomás’s family’s journey

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will map out the journey that Tomás and his family took from Texas to Iowa using research to add details.

**Materials:**

- ◇ Blank map of the United States of America
- ◇ Atlas
- ◇ Internet access or books about different states

**Activity:**

1. Provide students with blank maps of the United States of America or create a large map for the class.
2. Have students add in the route that Tomás and his family likely took to travel from Texas to Iowa.
3. Have students research how Texas is different from Iowa.
4. Have students add in pictures representing characteristics of Texas, Iowa, and other states the family passed through to their map. Ideas include adding in landmarks, towns, terrain, weather, animals, flowers, and trees that the family might have seen along the way.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1. How are Iowa and Texas different from one another?
2. What types of things might Tomás and his family seen or experienced on their drives between Texas and Iowa?

**Extension Activity:**

Sometimes time can move very slowly and a minute can feel like an hour! Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5. Have each group create a scene that shows just a minute of time in which Tomás and his family are on the long ride to Iowa. What would they do? What would they talk about? How would they feel about being in the hot truck for such a long time? Share the scenes with the rest of the class.

# POST-SHOW ASSESSMENT

## 4) LIBRARY LADY POSTCARDS

**Goal:** To imagine what happened to Tomás after he said goodbye to the library lady.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will write a postcard to the library lady from Tomás.

**Materials:**

- ◇ Postcard-sized note cards, one per student
- ◇ Writing utensils
- ◇ Crayons, colored pencils, or other art supplies

**Activity:**

1. Ask students to recall the sad word that Tomás taught the library lady at the end of the story. (Adiós, or goodbye).
2. Tell students that they are going to imagine that Tomás and the library did not really say goodbye and that they continued their friendship by writing to one another. Students are going to imagine that they are Tomás and write a postcard to their librarian friend.
3. Provide each student with a postcard-sized notecard. Ask them to think about what Tomás would be doing when he wrote his postcard? What kinds of things would he want to share with the library lady? Ideas include:
  - ◇ Things he saw during the drive back to Texas
  - ◇ How things were going at his school with his teacher
  - ◇ Stories he is reading or things he is learning about
4. Have students illustrate the front-side of their postcard with crayons, colored pencils, or other art supplies. Encourage them to create a design that represents what Tomás wrote to the library lady about.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1. What do you think happened to Tomás after he and the library lady said goodbye? What happened to the library lady?
2. What did you write about on your postcard? Why do you think Tomás would have wanted to share that with the library lady?

**Extension Activity:**

Have students research the life of Tomás Rivera. What was his life like as a teenager, a young man, and an adult? Have them write additional postcards to the library lady imagining that they are now Tomás at an older age.

## 5) "LIBRARY MAGIC"

**Goal:** To celebrate libraries and to analyze a poem

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will read and recite Pat Mora's poem "Library Magic" written in honor of Tomás Rivera

**Materials:**

- ◇ Copies or overhead transparency of "Library Magic" found on page 16
- ◇ Red and blue writing utensils

**Activity:**

1. Provide students with copies of the poem "Library Magic" (page 16) or print the poem on an overhead transparency.
2. Read the poem aloud as a class or assign students to read various lines.
3. Ask students to identify the different types of things you can find in a library according to the poem. Underline them in red. (Books, nooks, puppet shows, stories, computers, maps, facts, fun.)
4. Next, ask students to identify what Mora compares the library to. Circle in blue. ("Treasure house" with a "magic door".)
5. Ask students to think about whether a library really is a treasure house or has a magic door. Why would the poet say these things about the library?
6. Last, ask students to create actions that go along with various lines or key words in the poem. Take ideas and vote as a class which ideas they like best to represent how the poet describes the library. (Example: pretending to open a book with your hands, pantomiming a telescope for the word "explore", etc.)
7. Once students are comfortable reciting the text and with their actions, take a class trip to your school library. Surprise your school librarian with an impromptu performance of the poem.

**Follow-up Questions:**

1. Why are libraries special?
2. How does a library allow you to soar?
3. Do you have a library card? If not, is there someone in your family who can take you to the library to get one?

## **“LIBRARY MAGIC HANDOUT”** (For use with activity on page 15)

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*¡Vamos!* Let’s go to the library!”

Tomás said to his family. He showed them his favorite books and his cozy reading nooks.

*¡Vamos!* Let’s go to the library!”

Tomás said to his friends. “Hurry!” They saw *libros* in stacks and rows. They laughed at funny puppet shows.

*¡Vamos!* Let’s all go to the library!

Join the fun, a treasure house that’s free. Bring your friends and family. Stories, computers, maps and more, facts, fun. Enter the magic door. Like Tomás, open books and soar. Be a reader. Explore galore.

**In memory of the leader, educator and author,**

**Tomás Rivera**

~Pat Mora, 2005

# RESOURCES AND SOURCES



## BOOKS

### By Pat Mora (plus many more):

- ◇ *Confetti: Poems for Children*
- ◇ *A Library for Juana: The World of Sor Juana Inés*
- ◇ *Doña Flor: A Tall Tale About a Giant Woman with a Great Big Heart*

### Speaking Two Languages:

- ◇ *Pepita Talks Twice/Pepita Habla Doc Veces* by Ofelia Dumas Lachtman

### Families:

- ◇ *Poems to Dream Together/Poemas par soñar juntos* by Francisco X. Alarcón
- ◇ *Barrio: José's Neighborhood* by George Ancona
- ◇ *In My Family* by Carmen Lomas Garza
- ◇ *Family Pictures/Cuadros de Familia* by Carmen Lomas Garza

### Migrant Workers:

- ◇ *Amelia's Road* by Linda Jacob's Altman
- ◇ *Migrant Worker: A Boy from the Rio Grande Valley* by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith
- ◇ *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* by Kathleen Krull
- ◇ *Lights on the River* by Jane Resh Thomas

## CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Memories of a Former Migrant Worker by Felix Contreras.

*Interview describing the experience of growing up as a member of a migrant farm worker family.* <http://www.npr.org/blogs/pictureshow/2010/10/08/130425856/cesar-chavez>

Pat Mora's Official Website.

*Interviews, photos, book lists, and classroom ideas to accompany author Pat Mora's works.* [www.patmora.com](http://www.patmora.com)

Reader's Theater Script about Tomás Rivera.

<http://www.pcboe.net/les/elderweb/HARCOURT%20FILES/First%20Grade/Lesson%2015%20Reader's%20Theater.pdf>

Tomás and the Library Lady Print-ables from Childsplay.

*Print-able word finds, word match, and maze to accompany the play.* <http://www.childsplayaz.org/resources-tomas>

All About Tomás Rivera.

*Overview of Tomás Rivera's Life and Works.* [www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Tomás\\_Rivera](http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Tomás_Rivera)

## STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

Childsplay Theatre for Everyone. <http://www.childsplayaz.org>

Larson, Jeanette. "Talking with Pat Mora." Book Links, January 2011, pp. 23-26. <http://www.patmora.com/images/educators-booklinks2011.pdf>

*Tomás and the Library Lady* Study Guide, Childsplay's 360° Theatre Resources for Schools. <http://www.childsplayaz.org/national-tour>

Children's Dictionary. Wordsmyth.

<http://www.wordsmyth.net/blog/children-dictionary/>

Image credit: Illustration by Paul Colón from *Tomás and the Library Lady* by Pat Mora.