

FRIENDSHIP STUDENT STEPS INTO THE PBS TELEVISION SPOTLIGHT



Above: Emma Masters had "A Dog's Story" featured on West Tennessee PBS station WLJT-TV and on the PBS Kids network this summer. (Photo courtesy of Amanda Masters)



Above: Emma was placed in front of a "green screen" for the taping of her story. In the finished product, Emma is seen among the illustrations she created to accompany "A Dog's Story." (Photo courtesy of Amanda Masters)

By Ron Barry

Chances are, if you walk down the main street of Friendship, Tennessee – population just over 600 folks – you aren't likely to spot a television star.

But if you'll take time to swing by Friendship Elementary School on Highway 189, you'll find a young lady who's not only been on television but may be on her way to a career as an author someday.

Emma Masters – daughter of Josh and Amanda Masters – was in her Second Grade class last spring when her teacher Sabrina Anglin encouraged her to submit an entry to the West Tennessee PBS "Young Writers and Illustrators Contest," sponsored locally by WLJT-TV (Channel 11).

Each spring, PBS invites students from anywhere in West Tennessee – from kindergarten through Fifth Grade – to write and illustrate a short story to be submitted to the station, with awards for First Place and Second Place selected for each grade level.

Emma composed and illustrated an entry titled "A Dog's Story," and her submission won Second Place in her age group. That designation allowed Emma the opportunity to attend an awards luncheon in Jackson, where she was taped reading her story, to be aired throughout the summer on WLJT and on the PBS Kids channel. Emma's story can still be viewed at <https://www.westtnpbs.org/education>.

Emma's mom, Amanda – who is the physical education and STEM teacher at Friendship Elementary – was predictably excited about Emma's achievement.

"We were so thrilled that she was selected as a winner," Amanda said. "It was such a neat experience, and Emma was very excited to have the opportunity to read her story and be filmed for television. Her father and I believe that she learned to take pride in her storytelling, from the first draft to the final draft, and she created a story she was truly proud of."

For her part, Emma enjoyed the process as well.

"I learned that good work takes time and practice," she said. "The experience was fun, and I enjoyed learning how to write a story."

Emma may never become the next J. K. Rowling – then again, she might – but she's taken the first step to be on her way.



Above: Emma went to Jackson for an awards luncheon and then to the WLJT studio ... (Photo courtesy of Amanda Masters)