

## **BIOGRAPHY**

We bring the field trip to the school! Art cars—and outsider art in general—are a type of folk art that doesn't hang on a wall; this is the basis of the children's book, *Arthur Zarr's Amazing Art Car*, written by Cathey Nickell and illustrated by Bill Megenhardt. Their goal is to inspire kids to read, write, draw and create as much as possible!

Cathey and Bill introduce their award-winning book with a dynamic writing and drawing presentation for elementary schools. Cathey talks to students about how to find that spark of inspiration to uncover amazing story ideas. A favorite moment is when she shows the books she wrote as a child—homemade with folded paper and stapled binding. Her message is: "Just keep writing! Just keep writing! Just keep writing!"

Then Bill, who has illustrated more than thirty-five books for children, gives a live art demonstration and encourages kids to "be as creative as possible." Students watch him draw playful, on-the-spot illustrations based on ideas they generate as an audience.

Following the presentation, the children go outside to see a REAL art car! Locating an art car in Houston is fairly easy; Cathey also has had success scheduling them in other cities if she can track down a driver.

Themes of friendship and community, recycling and re-purposing, and imagination and art, are woven together in the tapestry of this story that Cathey and Bill bring to the school. The goal: to inspire kids to keep reading, writing, drawing and creating!

*Arthur Zarr's Amazing Art Car* includes a nonfiction history of art cars to help teachers incorporate this colorful topic into their art and writing curriculum. Program includes a presentation by the author, a demonstration by the illustrator, and an up-close visit with the art car/driver. Schools can hire Cathey and Bill together as a team or individually.

### **Artistic Training and Expertise:**

Cathey Nickell draws from her experience as a former newspaper reporter to bring an inspirational presentation full of personal stories and writing tips. Cathey earned a B.A. from Baylor University and an M.A. from LSU-Shreveport. She is the author of *Arthur Zarr's Amazing Art Car*, which won First Place for Children's Picture Books by the Texas Association of Authors (2017).

Bill Megenhardt received a B.F.A. degree from Kent State University and has illustrated more than 35 books for children. He teaches after-school art classes for students in Kindergarten through fourth grade for City ArtWorks of Houston. He also has conducted illustration workshops for children through City ArtWorks.

Cathey and Bill participate in book fairs, the Texas Library Association conferences, the Texas Book Festival, and more.