

Multicultural moment

Storytelling event shows children the value of diversity with tales of culture and unconditional love.

BY NICOLE T. LESSON
STAFF WRITER

KENDALL • Words, dancing and music took the stage on Sunday during Common Threads, a 45-minute storytelling event featuring multicultural folklore.

"I learned that a lot of people can seem the same and different at the same time," said Noah Spiner, 7, of Homestead, who attended the event at the Dave & Mary Alper Jewish Community Center in Kendall. "I loved the drums because you can make different sounds and beats."

Rachel Kohrman, one of the storytellers, read *The Little House*, an English adaptation of the classic Yiddish fable about six animal friends who are confronted by a ferocious bear and unite to defend their home.

"It's important that we teach diversity and not tolerance," Kohrman said. "The children see the different types of people. We teach them that everyone has a heart and brain in common."

"[*The Little House*] taught me that one person can be weak alone, but with other people they can be strong together," said Nat, Noah's 10-year-old brother. "When a bear came along, they each used their qualities and beat him together."

The boys' mother, Cheryl Spiner, said that storytelling is a great educational outlet for her children.

"It's a way of learning about something and being entertained at the same time," said Spiner, who takes her children to hear stories even when they travel. "It shows you don't have to play video games to have fun."

The Cuban story focused on unconditional love and the symbolism of drums was the subject of the African-American story.

The JCC and the Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture, in conjunction with the Ciboney Tribe, Leaping Literacy and Mondo Vibe, presented the event.

The center started Common Threads two years ago.

"It allows us to share the unique beauty of cultures that live in South Florida as well as the universal connection between them," said David Weintraub, executive director of the center, who hopes to bring the group to



Broward County in the near future.

Nicole T. Lesson can be reached at nlesson@sun-sentinel.com or 954-385-7920.

CAUGHT UP IN THE BEAT: Ian Casero, 4, of Kendall, grooves to the beat of African drumming during a storytelling event by Common Threads at the Dave and Mary Alper Jewish Community Center. Staff photo/Anastasia Walsh