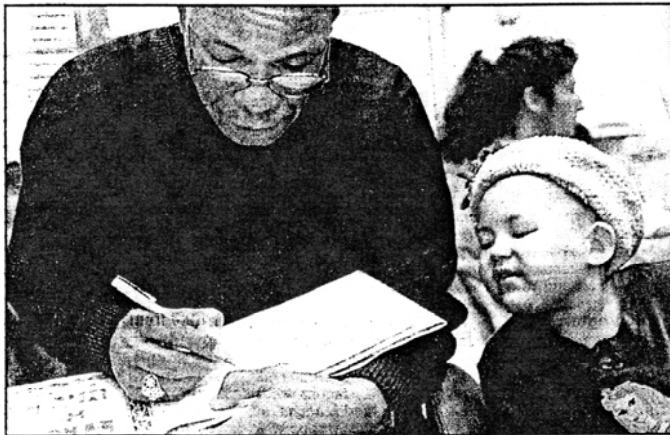


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At reading, a mother speaks volumes about her dead son



MINDY SCHAUER/The Orange County Register

HE'S A HIT: Baseball great Rod Carew autographs a copy of 'The Jester Has Lost His Jingle,' by David Saltzman, for leukemia patient Vivianne Espiritu, 4, at Children's Hospital of Orange County.

PEOPLE: Barbara Saltzman's presentation of David Saltzman's 'The Jester Has Lost His Jingle' has CHOC patients smiling.

By **ERIC CARPENTER**
The Orange County Register

ORANGE — A few minutes into the story, Barbara Saltzman got what she came for: a roomful of smiles.

"I want to see every tooth in your mouth, even if it's only spaces," she told the children.

Saltzman came to Children's Hospital of Orange County on Thursday to share her son's legacy by reading "The Jester Has Lost His Jingle," a book written and illustrated by her son, Da-

vid, before he died of Hodgkin's disease in 1990.

The tale of a jester who helps a mythical kingdom rediscover laughter also brought a smile to Hall of Fame baseball player Rod Carew, who came at Saltzman's invitation to honor the memory of his daughter, Michelle. She was 18 in 1996 when she died at CHOC after a battle with leukemia.

As Saltzman began to read, Vivianne Espiritu, 4, looked up, wide-eyed, from her tiny chair. Vivianne has leukemia and has spent most of her life in the hospital. At this moment all that seemed to matter was the jingling of jester bells.

"Won't you laugh with me?" Saltzman read. "We'll start off very slowly with a tiny tee-hee-hee."

And with that, Vivianne put

her hands in front of her mouth in a shy attempt to mask an uncontrollable grin.

"I like the jingles," she said. "It's these moments that touch Saltzman's heart and fuel her through a relentless touring schedule. She started a company to publish her son's book, and her nonstop promotion has helped sell 200,000 copies. It peaked at No. 16 on the New York Times best-seller list last year.

"The Jester is David; it was his philosophy," Saltzman said. "And it's wonderful to see it cheering up these children."

For Carew, it was a bitter-sweet return to the hospital where he lived for so many weeks at Michelle's bedside.

"It brings back some bad memories," he said. "But to see the way (the children) are smiling, that's special for me."