



## Eagle Scout Entertains and Inspires Kids

When prolific children’s author and Eagle Scout Michael Anthony “Ant” Steele dropped by his old grade school, Russell Elementary in Brownsville, Texas, a few years ago, he remembered that it was there that he first acquired the writing bug. So he returned in 2006 for the school’s 90th anniversary to tell his story, read from his books, and share an important message: “You can do anything you want to do.”

That’s certainly been the case with Steele. He’s the author of more than 80 children’s books, including novelizations of movies such as “Speed Racer” and chapter books that build on franchises such as Shrek and G.I. Joe. He’s written dozens of episodes for the TV shows “Wishbone” and “Barney & Friends.” He’s worked on the corporate side of the entertainment industry as the creative development director for Lyrick Studios. And he’s a co-creator of the digital comic-book series “Clown Commandos.”

Despite his success and lifelong love of writing, Steele actually studied photography —which seemed a safer career choice— at the Art Institute of Dallas. However, a friend who did special effects on the “Wishbone” series recruited him to help out “whenever they would need an extra pair of hands or another warm body with a very low skill level,” Steele said. He wrote a couple of “Wishbone” scripts on speculation,



which led to a chance to co-write an episode, which led to a gig as a staff writer.

*Photo courtesy of Michael Anthony Steele*

Similar networking has led to most of his other projects over the years. “It’s just kind of word of mouth,” he said. “A lot of people don’t realize that these kinds of authors are around.”

These days, Steele balances writing with a busy schedule of school visits. He’s also gotten involved with his nephew’s Boy Scout troop in the Dallas area, where he looks forward to helping the Scouts strengthen their patrols.

“I had good relationships with my Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmaster, but they weren’t the ones I dealt with,” he said. “It was the patrol leaders. These guys were like grown-ups as far I was concerned. They were master woodsmen as far as I knew. They were the ones I looked up to. I wanted to be cool like that.”

It’s the same sentiment kids at places such as Russell Elementary have when Steele comes to visit.

For more information on Steele’s work, visit [www.michaelanthonysteele.com](http://www.michaelanthonysteele.com).