MAKING HAROLD'S WORLD

Harold has a big imagination and a crayon that is sort of magic. When he draws things, they come to life. In the play, we want to show how Harold sees the world while he is on his adventures.

How can we make that happen? In many different ways—such as moving scenery, puppets and special lighting. We are also using animation to help tell parts of the story.

What is animation? If you've seen a cartoon, you've seen animation. Animation makes pictures appear to move. Thousands of drawings are needed for only a few minutes of animation. Each drawing is a bit different from the one before it. For example, to show a character walking, the first drawing might show the character with both feet on the ground. The next drawing might show the knee with a tiny bend and the foot slightly off the ground. In the third drawing, the knee might be bent more and the foot might be a little farther off the ground, and so on.

Why does it look like movement? When the images change quickly enough, your eyes and brain work to blend them together into one action. Your brain holds on to an image for a fraction of a second longer than the eye actually sees it. That is why the world doesn't suddenly go black every time you blink. Take a pencil and wiggle it around. Do you notice how you see the movement? You are seeing where the pencil is and where it was at almost the same time, like it's one picture. Those actions look mixed together.

Here's an experiment you can do to get an idea of how animation works. This is based on a toy from a long time ago called a thaumatrope (thaw-muh-trohp).

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Color in Harold's rocket and the stars in the pictures on the next page.

2. With the help of an adult, cut out the circles.

3. Use tape or glue to attach a straw or pencil to the center of the back of one of the circles. Line up the back of the other circle and attach it. Make sure the pictures are facing out.

4. Roll the straw back and forth between the palms of your hands, while you look at the picture. What do you see?