There are always lessons in Alyce Smith-Cooper’s work, whether they’re found in the stories she shares as an ancestral storyteller, or the work she’s done in the community as a registered nurse, chaplain and ordained minister. Today, she’ll relay some of those lessons through her telling of “Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters,” by Caldecott winner John Steptoe.

“I got started many years ago, as a result of being an actress and working ensemble with a director and a regular production crew,” she says of her work as a storyteller and performer. “It was then that I discovered the freedom of storytelling as a solo artist. With that, I was led more deeply into studying the art of storytelling.”

Her performance is from 2 to 3 p.m. today at the David C. Copley Foundation Teen IDEA Lab in the Logan Heights Library, featuring the story of two beautiful sisters with very different personalities — one is very kind and the other is more mean-spirited. The organizers asked for this story because of its portrayal of the ways that values build character and character shapes lives, she says.

Smith-Cooper, who lives in southeastern San Diego, is a teaching artist and family arts program storyteller with the nonprofit Arts Education Connection San Diego and has previously performed at the Old Globe, La Jolla Playhouse and the Lyceum Theatre. She took some time to talk about her performance today, being recognized for her contributions, and what she’s learning in this current season of her life.

What I love about southeastern San Diego ...

I love the seclusion of my patio prayer garden in the midst of a thriving urban community. My neighbors are thoughtful and supportive of my ways of showing gratitude to the creator, which include waving flags and burning incense. They look out for my well-being, including taking out my trash. seen myself as a service provider in any role that I have taken in my life. As a result of receiving these honors and being recognized in this way, I now find myself transitioning into one who can also graciously receive.