



The Ledger

6th annual Embracing Dr. Seuss' Differences Day is March 1



Alta Vista Elementary School first graders Dylan Sanchez, left, and Pierre Lubens dig into their own copies of a classic tale by Dr. Seuss in 2017. [Herald-Tribune archive photo]

By Community Submitted

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More than 6,000 elementary school students from 45 schools in Sarasota and Manatee counties will celebrate reading and diversity on March 1, the 115th birthday of Dr. Seuss.

Embracing Dr. Seuss' Differences Day is the brainchild of [Embracing Our Differences](#), a local non-profit organization that created the event six years ago as part of its ongoing educational initiatives. For the fourth year in a row, the [Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#) is participating through funding from The Patterson Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, United Way Suncoast and an anonymous family foundation.

According to Brenna Wilhm, director of operations for Embracing Our Differences, readings are scheduled for more than 360 pre-kindergarten to third-grade classrooms in 45 schools across Sarasota and Manatee counties. To date, 280 volunteers from the community have signed up to be readers.

Over the course of the day, more than 6,500 books, focused on the theme of diversity and inclusion, will be gifted to every participating student and classroom. The books are courtesy of Embracing Our Differences and the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, with support from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, The Patterson Foundation, United Way Suncoast and an anonymous family foundation.

“Dr. Seuss epitomizes a love of children and learning,” says Wilhm. “His use of rhyme is an effective tool for teaching young children about the joys of reading and language. When we celebrate Dr. Seuss and reading, we send a clear message to our children that reading is fun and important.”

She adds that the books selected for this year’s readings are designed to stimulate conversations regarding diversity, bullying, character education and respect for others.

— *Submitted by Su Byron*