



Dr. Seuss's 115th birthday celebrated with focus on diversity



Volunteer reader Terri Vitale, along with a Lorax finger puppet, reads "The Lorax" to third-grade students in Lida Daley's class at Alta Vista Elementary on Friday, Mar. 1, 2019. "Embracing Dr. Seuss' Differences Day" marks the 115th birthday of author Dr. Seuss and, to celebrate the event, 280 volunteer readers read his books aloud in more than 360 pre-kindergarten through third-grade classrooms in Sarasota and Manatee. [Herald-Tribune staff photo / Mike Lang]

By Staff report

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Hundreds of volunteer readers are visiting Sarasota and Manatee elementary schools today to read Dr. Seuss stories and discuss how those tales encourage acceptance of others.

Elementary school students in Sarasota and Manatee counties celebrated Dr. Seuss' 115th birthday on Friday by reading some of Seuss' classic storybooks, focusing on the themes of diversity and inclusion.

“Embracing Dr. Seuss’ Differences Day” brought 280 volunteer readers into more than 360 pre-kindergarten through third-grade classrooms in Sarasota and Manatee. Volunteers read titles including “The Cat in the Hat,” “Green Eggs and Ham” and “Horton Hears a Who.” Organizers say the stories were selected in order to spark conversations about diversity, bullying and character education.

“Dr. Seuss epitomizes a love of children and learning,” said Brenna Wilhm, Embracing Our Differences director of operations. “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.”

The event was organized by the non-profit Embracing Our Differences with the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and funding from the Patterson Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, United Way Suncoast and an anonymous family donor. The Suncoast Campaign for Grade Level Reading will be distributing more 6,500 books to the participating classrooms and students. The day of Seuss is part of Embracing Our Differences larger mission, which is to use art and education to promote diversity.