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## Youth Celebrate Literacy with Book, Toy Drive Honoring Seuss' Birthday

(Bel Air, Md.) – Fifth-grade students from Harford Day School have teamed with the We Canceerve Movement, Inc., to collect new books and new toys for young children who are hospitalized or homeless. But there's a catch: the toys are all stuffed animals that match the main character in each donated book.

We Canceerve calls this project "Books & Buddies" and they started it in 2012 when they donated the literacy play sets to Sinai Hospital's pediatric hematology and oncology clinic in Baltimore to children getting chemotherapy, in particular, to have fun while enduring long hours of treatment. Sets have been donated to the University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Medical Center children's wing and to the pediatric emergency room since 2013. Now, the initiative is expanding to include homeless children who are pre-teens and younger.

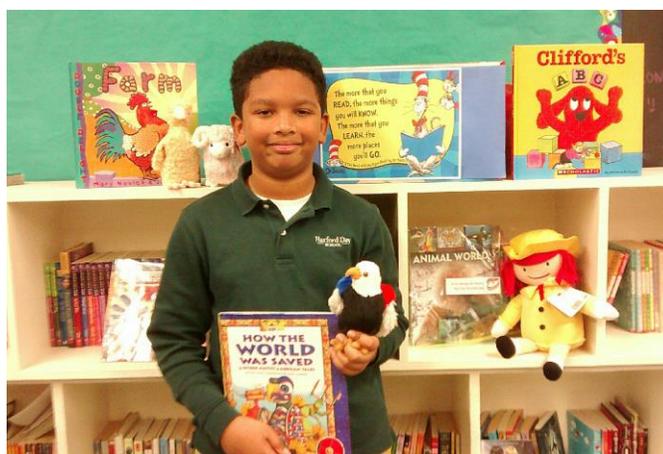
Books and stuffed animals that match their main characters can be purchased at a number of area stores that sell books and toys. The collection lasts through March 2, which is Dr. Seuss' birthday.

Mario Nandalal, a Harford Day School fifth-grade student and a member of the all-youth board of advisors for the We Canceerve Movement, is leading the initiative. He set a goal to "collect at least 25, maybe even 50 or more, books and stuffed animals. My friends are going to help me."

"This project is important because we know how much fun it is to read. We want other kids to have the opportunity to read. Sometimes, when you read a great book, you can forget about any bad things going on in your life. If kids are sick or in pain, homeless or in a shelter, reading can help them focus on happy times or adventures. Then, they won't have to feel sad. They might forget some of the bad things for a little while," said Nandalal, age 10. "That is a great thing!"

He said he first fell in love with reading when he was three years old. He said he and his mother started reading Magic Tree House books then and "by the time I started kindergarten, we had finished my brother's collection books 1-45."

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## **Books & Buddies 2/2/2**

"Literacy means being able to read and write. It is important because you need to be able to read and write in order to learn and do a good job in school. You have to read directions, projects, math problems, etc. Plus, reading is a lot of fun!"

Donations of new books and matching stuffed animals can be delivered up to March 2, to Diana Realty, Inc. located at 414 S. Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014 or at Harford Day School, located at 715 Moores Mill Rd, Bel Air, MD 21014.

To date, We Canceve has donated more than 45 "books and buddies" set to area hospitals, \$9,000 in cash grants to Sinai Hospital, Casey Cares Foundation, Harford Family House, Anna's House, Eastside Family Emergency Shelter and the Sharing Table, and plus more than \$23,000 in products to more than seven homeless shelters, four hospitals and a group home for children in foster care.

We Canceve has established an accumulator fund with the Community Foundation of Harford County (CFHC). The We Canceve Accumulator Fund will eventually become a permanent fund of CFHC to support the work of the We Canceve Movement. Contributions made to the Community Foundation of Harford County are tax-deductible, and can be designated to the We Canceve Accumulator Fund. The Community Foundation of Harford County is a 501(c)(3) public charity (nonprofit) supported by the community through donations. For more information, visit [www.wecanceve.org](http://www.wecanceve.org).

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