

## Indian Head students receive free books for Read Across America

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 03/07/2019

**LA PLATA, Md.** - On Friday, March 1 Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) hosted guest readers at schools throughout the county as part of its Read Across America celebration. The annual event highlights the importance of reading. Guest speakers visit elementary school classrooms throughout the day to read fun and exciting books to students. One local organization, the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, took the fun of the event further and gave each student at Indian Head Elementary School a book to take home.

The books were donated by Forever Free Books, a local nonprofit organization. Don Barnett is a community liaison with Forever Free Books and literacy chair for Omega Psi Phi. He said this is the third year the organization has collaborated with Forever Free Books to donate books to students. "We do this each year, but this is our first year at Indian Head. The kids in our community have a need and we enjoy giving books to kids who love to read," Barnett said.

Barnett and other members of Omega Psi Phi visited Indian Head on March 1 to read to students and deliver books. They pushed a cart of books from class to class and were met with eager smiles and gratitude from students and teachers. Indian Head second-grade teacher Jasmine Thomas said one of her favorite days of the school year is when they celebrate Read Across America and focus on literacy.

"I love that students get to interact with lots of different books and guest readers. The kids like that and it makes the day really fun," Thomas said.

Barnett's wife, Tanya, launched Forever Free Books in 2015 after seeing a need in the community. She has worked with CCPS as a long-term substitute teacher for a few years and wanted to give back to kids. "When she started to work at a school, she saw a lot of kids without books. She started to ask around in the community for donations and Forever Free Books just grew from there," Don Barnett said.

Fontella Moody manages a local insurance agency through State Farm and Forever Free Books is a client. Her agency helped to purchase more than 500 books for Indian Head students. On Friday, Moody was part of the group who handed out books to students. "This is a lot of fun. Look how the kids' faces light up," Moody said.

The books ranged in grade-level topics and content for students in prekindergarten to Grade 5. Sarah Fleck, the reading resource teacher at Indian Head, helped to coordinate Read Across America activities and the book donation for Indian Head students. Other guest readers at Indian Head included Board of Education Member Tajala Battle-Lockhart, Indian Head Mayor Brandon Paulin, Women of Action Charles County President and Chair of the Charles County Central Democratic Committee Abeena McAllister. Students from the Henry E. Lackey High School Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM) program also visited Indian Head to read to students.

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