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## June 2020 Newsletter

New Haven Reads is set for distance learning summer!

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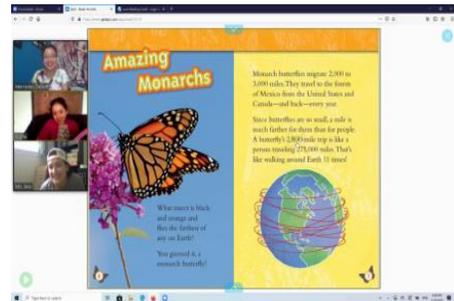
### We are set for a great summer of reading - online!

Even though our spring semester did not turn out the way that we had planned, we are glad to report that:



- we **pivoted to distance learning** with almost 200 students in one-on-one online tutoring
- we **connected families with technology** where needed
- we **retrained our amazing tutors** in the new model.
- we **distributed almost 5,000 books** at meal pick-up locations across New Haven

We are now preparing for summer tutoring for 300 students! We are also adding programming for our youngest Pre-K and Kindergarten students.



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### Jeff Kinney video for our NHR student, Elio



Photo by Filip Wolak

*Wimpy Kid* book series author, Jeff Kinney, read about how New Haven Reads had pivoted to distance learning in [this New Haven Independent article](#) and saw our student, Elio, reading a *Wimpy Kid* book with his tutor John! Jeff Kinney made a personal video message for Elio to encourage him to continue his reading and all of the hard work he is doing! Elio was completely wowed to hear from his favorite author!

We are so grateful to Jeff Kinney for inspiring Elio.

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## Just Books: NHR Equity and Inclusion Book Project!

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Since early May, **New Haven Reads** has distributed **thousands of books to children through the meal pick-up locations in New Haven.**

**We were inspired to create a two-week fundraiser to purchase diverse books for these distributions.**



Students need to have diverse books, not simply so students of color can feel more comfortable and confident in who they are, but because they will learn better. Diverse books are more engaging for students of color, thus boosting academic performance.

### Can YOU help us with this campaign?



Your gift will help us make a discounted, bulk purchase of books including:

- books by black and brown authors
- books with characters and themes that reflect the lives of the children reading them
- books in Spanish

**Our goal is to purchase 1,600 books which would cover two weeks of book distributions.** Please join us and ensure that our community's children have diverse books!

Thank you!

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### **NHR featured on NBC CT!**

We were excited to have our book distributions and online tutoring featured on **NBC CT**. Check out the video link and watch the feature!



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## Volunteer Spotlight: Gene Kirsten



Three years ago, Gene Kirsten retired from his job with the US States Postal Service.

Throughout his career, he cherished the personal interactions he had day-to-day. After retiring, he wanted to find something that still allowed for these personal connections, while also allowing him to help those in his community. New Haven Reads provided the perfect opportunity. Reflecting

on the past three years, Gene says, "I feel that New Haven Reads is an extremely caring organization, where each kid that is being tutored is being given special attention." This special attention is crucial to Gene in his tutoring sessions. "Sometimes the kids might show up to a tutoring session upset, for a number of outside reasons. But it is not a rigid program where you have to stick to the routine always; sometimes you can do alternative things — such as include educational games — to make it a lighthearted session. They can go from crying before the session starts, to all smiles by the end of it."

**We are so appreciative of Gene and all of our volunteers for their selfless dedication to helping our students over the last three years!**

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## Student Spotlight: Stephanie P.

Ross/Woodward School third grader, Stephanie, has been at our Bristol Street site for the last two years. She has the perfect answer when asked what her favorite part about New Haven Reads is: "the books!" By working with her tutors, Sana and Valerie, she has improved her reading ability and her confidence in pronunciation, all while having a great time every week. When asked to describe New Haven Reads, Stephanie chose "fun" and "happy." She explains, "Every week, we get to read our tutors stories, and then we get to play some games with them at the end, too!" At the end of the conversation, Stephanie adds, "New Haven Reads makes me appreciate and enjoy all of the reading and math that I do. It makes me feel better." Students like Stephanie make us feel great, too! We are so proud of her commitment and improvement week after week.



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## Distance Learning by the Numbers

**191** students received **209** hours of tutoring thanks to the dedicated help of **100** volunteers

Our Book Distribution locations at New Haven Public Schools have distributed **4,740** books in **6** weeks thanks to the support of **13** volunteers.



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## Upcoming Events



### **NHR June Recess**

No tutoring - June 14 to July 5, 2020

The Book Bank is currently closed due to coronavirus. We are planning to open the book bank on certain days in the summer with added safety precautions. Please stay tuned.

### **One-on-One Tutoring and Pre-K and K Summer Camp**

All summer sessions are online. Summer session starts on July 6 and will end on August 14.

### **General Tutor Training for Distance Learning**

June 30, 4PM-5:30PM

### **Online: Summer Lecture Series**

Saturday July 18, 4PM.

#### **Topic: ESL in America**

Dr. Laura Reynolds, Associate Professor, Southern Connecticut State University.

Saturday, August 1, Time TBD

#### **Topic: Parts of language and learning to read**

Dr. Dave Braze,  
Haskins Laboratories, Yale University