

# Dulles Elementary School second-graders read to seniors every week

By Mike Sprague, Staff Writer  
Posted: 11/19/2009 04:45:11 PM PST



Frances Chavez listens as second-grader Savannah Morales reads a Dr. Seuss book at the Breezewood Senior Apartments in La Mirada on Thursday November 19, 2009. Six second-graders from Dulles Elementary School walk from their school to read to seniors as part of a reading program. (SGVN/Staff Photo by Keith Durflinger)

LA MIRADA - Every Thursday Frances Chavez, Glen Chandler, Donnee Dyer and other seniors listen to a story over lunch.

They're among the five seniors at the Breezewood Village Senior Apartments who have second-grade students from nearby Dulles Elementary School walk over and read them stories.

Dulles second-grade teacher Victoria Pflanzer said it's a great opportunity for her children.

"We don't always have the opportunity for them to (read out loud)," Pflanzer said.

"They have an opportunity for silent reading but some of the students are very good actors," she said. "This holds them accountable, allowing them to read out loud."

And the youngsters also get a chance to write a letter to the senior with whom they interact.



Second-grader Shamus Meehan reads a book about sharks to Lucille Harrow, right, at the Breezewood Senior Apartments in La Mirada on Thursday November 19, 2009. Six second-graders from Dulles Elementary School walk from their school to read to seniors as part of a reading program. (SGVN/Staff Photo by Keith Durflinger)

"They talk about their experience, express their gratitude to the senior and how much they want to come back," Pflanze said.

About five students - they're different every week - have been walking for the last seven weeks to the senior apartments. Each child, who brings three to four books, is then paired with a senior.

Jasmin Gonzalez, 7, who read "Froggy Baby Sister" to Dyer on Thursday, said it's a lot of fun reading her book and she gets help.

That's part of the fun, said Chandler, 66.

"It's wonderful," he said. "Some of the children put inflections in their words they read. Some kids stumble over the words and I help them sound things out."

Dyer, 78, said she just enjoys being with the youngsters.

"You get to cuddle with them and let them sit on your lap and read," she said. "They read well. For second-graders, I'm amazed."

Sue Silva, Breezewood manager, said the seniors love the lunch-hour reading session.

"They look forward to it," Silva said. "They're here waiting about half an hour before. They get such a joy and the kids get such a joy."

It also gives a purpose to their life, she said.

"It gets them out of their apartment and some don't have a lot going on," she said

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