



**PRESS
RELEASE**

Bassett Unified School District

on the move

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For Immediate Release
May 9, 2017

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Nueva Vista Students Debut Children's Books for Edgewood Kindergartners

LA PUENTE, CA – Five Nueva Vista High School students wrote and illustrated their own children's books and read their work for Edgewood Academy kindergartners on April 21.

The students learned how to publish their books through the Author Project, a six-week extracurricular literacy program that teaches students how to compose and publish their own children's books.

"Every month, Nueva Vista students visit Edgewood to read to the kindergartners, and we thought it would be so nice if they could read books of their own original material," Nueva Vista teacher Jessica Estrada said. "It brings a personal touch to the visits and the kids love it."

Author Project students began their writing process in February by browsing through the children's book collection at a local public library, researching a wide variety of formats used by children's authors, including picture books, concept books, bilingual books and books based on actual events.

Once Nueva Vista students chose a format for their books, they conducted workshops where they shared ideas with each other and discussed what made certain books successful.

Nueva Vista senior Ashley Gutierrez chose to write a numbers book in Spanish. The book, titled "Los Numeros (La Version de Animales," introduces young readers to the numbers one to 10, with a corresponding animal – pig, cow, horse – for each number.

"I'm so happy I got a chance to read my own original work to my friends at Edgewood," Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez and her peers, all part of the Nueva Vista Leadership mentorship program, visit Edgewood Academy to tutor and help facilitate activities in kindergarten classrooms. The Nueva Vista students were eager to write their own books to share with the Edgewood students, hoping to inspire a culture of literacy among Edgewood kindergartners.

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"I would recommend the Author Project for anyone because writing is an essential skill and everyone needs it," Gutierrez said. "You choose your own subject, your own illustrations and do everything on your own."

Classmate Clarisa Casillas also wrote a bilingual concept book, "The ABCs of Comida." Others integrated humor, real-life events, fiction and plot twists into their stories, which resonated well with the kindergartners.

"My students love it – they enjoy listening to the stories," Edgewood kindergarten teacher Maggie Aguirre said. "It helps my students understand the importance of being literate."

The Author Project began as a collaboration with children's book author Elizabeth Jimenez, who came to Bassett in January to talk to the District English learners. Jimenez was inspired to write her book, "Lalo and the Red Hot Chile Pepper," after realizing the need for books to connect with a Latino audience.

Bassett High School students also started writing their own stories through The Author Project in April.

"Bassett Unified is committed to providing every student with a chance to be creative and collaborate with their peers," Bassett Unified Superintendent Dr. Alex Rojas said. "The Author Project provided an opportunity for our students to expand their skills in a hands-on project, and share their work with others."

PHOTOS:

050917_BASSETT_AUTHORPROJECT1: Nueva Vista senior Ashley Gutierrez reads aloud from her children's book "Los Numeros (La Version de Animales)" for Edgewood Academy kindergarten students on April 21, after completing the Author Project, a six-week extracurricular literacy program designed to teach students how to compose and publish their own stories.

050917_BASSETT_AUTHORPROJECT1: Nueva Vista seniors Clarisa Casillas and Adrian Cespedes share original stories they wrote through the Author Project with Edgewood Academy kindergartners on April 21. Nueva Vista students incorporated many styles into their children's books, including number and alphabet books, humor, real-life events and fiction.

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