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## GEEF Funds Reading Program at Havre de Grace Elementary

Bel Air, MD, April 24, 2017 – Fourth Grade Classes at Havre de Grace Elementary School welcomed representatives from Greater Excellence in Education Foundation (GEEF) into their classrooms earlier this month. The visit showcased the continued success of a foundation-funded reading program piloted in the school last year.

The innovative literacy program groups students according to their reading levels and engages them in a grade-wide author study. Last year, third grade students participated in an author study on Andrew Clements. Their response and engagement was so extraordinary, that teachers went back to GEEF to continue the program in the fourth grade. This time around, Kate DiCamillo was selected for the author study that is allowing 75 fourth graders to engage with the author according to their own ability, fostering a love of reading that will lay the groundwork for success in the years ahead.

"Over the last two years about 120 students have been impacted by the grant, says fourth grade teacher, Alison Baranowski. "Whenever we use books for an author study, students are encouraged to read the other books by the author, because they hear the interest among their peers. I would say that is a success! We are thankful to GEEF for bringing titles such as The Tale of Despereaux, Because of Winn Dixie, and The Magician's Elephant into the hearts and minds of our students. We are excited to continue our partnership with the Foundation and engage readers for years to come."

GEEF is funding the program and other innovative teacher-driven initiatives through its Classroom Innovation Grant program. "Teachers are spending on average \$500 - \$1,000 dollars a year of their own funds to enrich and extend learning in their classrooms," says Warren Hamilton, GEEF Board Chair. "For years, GEEF has been providing free school supplies and other resources for teachers to take back to their classrooms. We even have a resource center, where Harford County Public School teachers can shop for free for classroom materials. Teachers can also apply for a grant to our foundation, and buy the materials they need to take their lessons to exceptional heights, without burdening their own bottom-lines."

GEEF also invites the community to be a part of innovation in the classroom through its online Connect to a Classroom crowdfunding initiative. Connect to a Classroom allows the community to view classroom projects seeking support and contribute directly to that educator's project. Several of the classroom grants listed on the website are seeking funding for enhanced

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technology in the classroom, while other requests include ideas such as “calm-down kits” that promote self-regulation and “flexible seating” that includes bouncy-balls and standing desks, a new trend in education that has shown to aid student focus, especially among children with certain learning challenges like ADHD. As for Havre de Grace Elementary, the teachers plan to partner with GEEF next year in their fifth grade classes- extending the impact on participants for a third year. Learn more about Connect to a Classroom and their current project requests by visiting <http://www.geefinc.com/programs/classroom-grants>.

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*About GEEF:* Greater Excellence in Education Foundation (GEEF) invests in the education of 37,000 youth in Harford County Public Schools by providing programs and resources to complement the learning and growth of each student regardless of their economic circumstances. GEEF works in partnership with the community to bring critical resources to help students succeed in their academic and personal goals through middle and high school leadership programs, college and career mentoring, scholarships, free school supplies for low income students, grants to support innovative classroom instruction and celebrating the education profession with the community. Visit [www.geefinc.com](http://www.geefinc.com) to learn more.