

# Together We Can Read Celebrates Another Successful Year!



The City of Columbia and Richland School District One held their seventh annual “Together We Can Read” reading blitz on Thursday, Feb. 12, 2015 at 9 a.m. All third grade classes across Richland School District One participated.

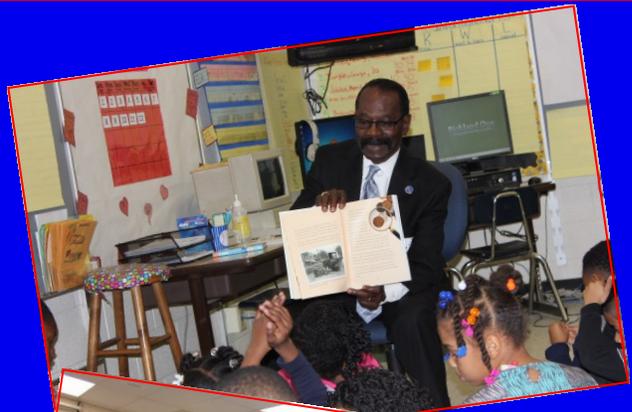
“Together We Can Read” is a reading day program that encourages children to read and brings community leaders into the classrooms. More than one hundred community leaders from across Columbia read to 2,000 third-grade students.

“In order to build a strong foundation, one must start with stable building blocks. This example applies to education as well. In order to prepare students for a successful academic journey, we must start early by giving them the tools they need to excel. Reading is one of those fundamental tools,” Councilwoman Devine commented.



We Are Columbia





*City Council members and the City Manager participating in the Together We Can Read initiative.*

Studies show that children who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade are more likely to drop out of school. Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine spearheaded the “Together We Can Read” initiative after reading to a classroom of students with a group of other local leaders.

“Bringing together government, business and neighborhood leaders from across Columbia to read to young students, Together We Can Read speaks volumes about our community’s commitment to our children,” said Mayor Steve Benjamin. “It’s a wonderful program and we’re proud to support it year after year.”

This year’s book was “First, You Explore: The Story of the Young Charles Townes” written by Rachel Haynie and illustrated by Trahern Cook. Both the author and the illustrator participated in the initiative.

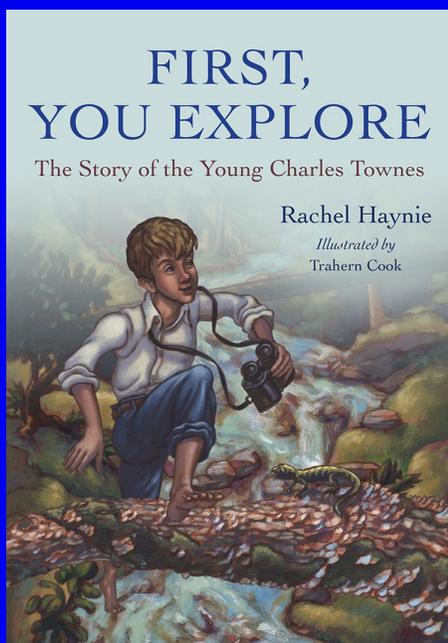
# Comments from Readers

"I loved my assignment at Hopkins Elementary! The students really engaged with the book, asking questions, and were particularly impressed that the book was about a man from South Carolina who had such a national impact. The teacher even made comments afterwards that she, herself, found the book to be very interesting. The kids were very excited that they got to keep the book in their classroom."

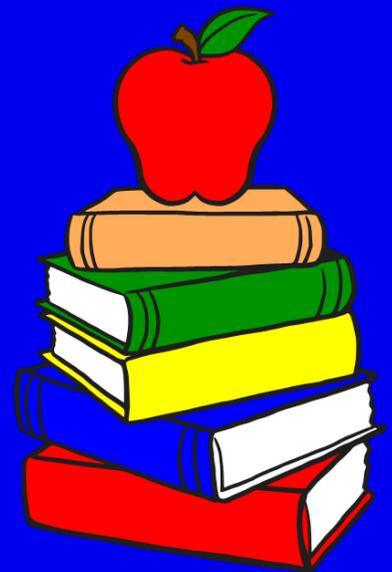
"I enjoyed this experience and would definitely volunteer again if my schedule permits. To see the excitement in each child's face about this year's book selection was rewarding! The "Together We Can Read" initiative can not end as it is beneficial to all of the Richland one communities."

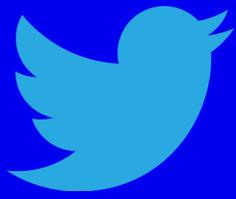
"It was very well organized, and it was a very rewarding experience for me. I hope the kids got half as much pleasure from it as I did. They sure seemed to enjoy the book and discussion."

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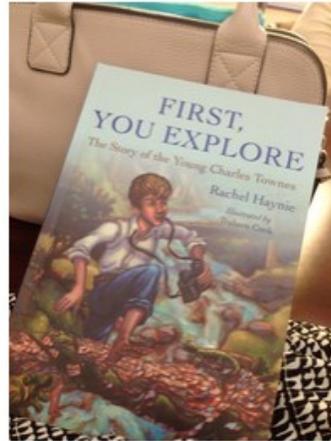
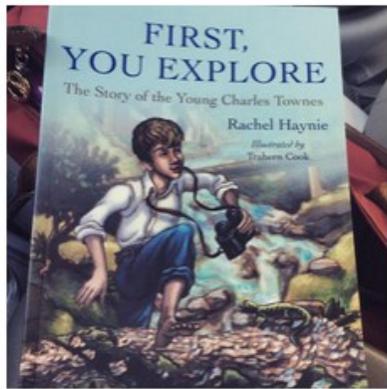
"I really enjoyed the experience and was delighted to be a part of this terrific program."





# Results for #TWCR

To view more photos from Together We Can Read, visit our Tumblr page [thecityofcolumbia.tumblr.com](http://thecityofcolumbia.tumblr.com)



# Together We Can Read By the Numbers

The "Together We Can Read" initiative is in its seventh year of implementation in all Richland School District One third grade classes. Approximately, 14,000 students have been impacted by this initiative over the years and over 700 community members have participated.

This year's numbers include:

- 28 schools
- 2,000 students
- 101 classes
- 101 celebrity readers

## Celebrity Readers,

*We would like to thank you for dedicating your time to read to our 3rd grade students, during the 2015 Together We Can Read event. We are so appreciative of your commitment to education and support of this initiative.*

*Best,  
Together We Can Read Partners*



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