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In Framingham, they take it one caterpillar at a time

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From right to left: Samantha Canales, vice president of merchandising at Staples Scott Rankin, Carlos Estrada, Danniell Perez, Brandon Fontenelle, Kayley Romero and Naomi Perez, read "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" as part of the Read for the Record campaign on Thursday, Oct. 8. (Courtesy: Staples, Inc.)

By Matt Rocheleau, Globe Correspondent

Over 100 local pre-school children from Southern Middlesex Opportunity Council in Framingham participated for the first time in an annual event which attempts to break the world record for the number of people reading the same book on the same day.

The pre-schoolers read Eric Carle's "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," on Thursday morning along with more than 1 million children worldwide, including 4,000 in Massachusetts, who pledged through the Read for the Record campaign to do the same, said a press release from Staples which is a sponsor for the event.

Read for the Record was created in 2006 by Jumpstart, a national non-profit organization dedicated to providing language, literacy and social skills to preschool children from low income communities.

The area students were split into four different classrooms and led by Staples and Jumpstart volunteers as well as other community members, including Ruth Winnett, Library Trustee for The Framingham Public Library and Town Manager Julian Suso.

In 2008, Jumpstart broke its own world record as nearly 700,000 readers shared the classic children's tale, "Corduroy," according to the non-profit's [Web site](#)

Now in its fourth year, Read for the Record has raised more than \$3 million to support Jumpstart, and more than half a million books have been donated.

"Reading aloud to young children lays the groundwork for strong literacy skills and future success in school and life," said Susan Werley, executive director of Jumpstart's Northeast Region, in the release. "With support from sponsors like

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Staples, Jumpstart is able to help at-risk, pre-school children build their literacy skills and better understand the importance of reading.”

Staples gave each child a copy of “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” to take home, and the office supplies company donated \$20,000 to Jumpstart in support of Read for the Record.



From right to left: front row: Naomi Perez, Johnyel Galvis, Miguel Colon, Henry Morales, and Luiz Zanotelle; second row: Kayley Romero, Elmer Melara, Carlos Estrada, Brandon Fontenelle, and Dannel Perez; third row: Ineysha Offarrill, Leah Miranda, Eva Marfo, Luiza Miranda, Cara Dewar of Staples, Samantha Canales; fourth row: vice president of merchandising at Staples Scott Rankin, and Marvin Salguero pose for a group photo on Thursday, Oct. 8, when they participated in the Read for the Record campaign by reading "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" (Courtesy: Staples, Inc.)

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