

# Back Bay

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## Boston aims to help set world reading record

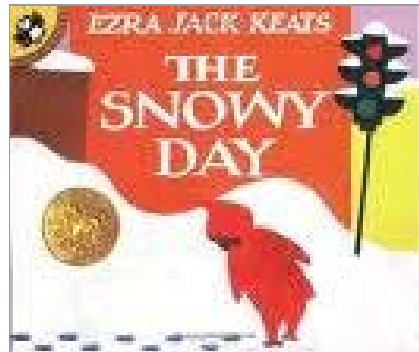
Posted October 5, 2010 03:48 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Hundreds of children across Boston will join millions worldwide for what is anticipated to be a record-setting day of reading a story many New Englanders can relate to: the first time venturing around a neighborhood after a fresh snowfall.

Ezra Jack Keats' timeless tale, "["The Snowy Day"](#)," chronicles a young boy experiencing his first snowball fight, snowman, and snow angel followed by the inevitable wet socks and a restless night worrying the outdoor winter wonderland might melt away by morning.



(Viking Children's Book)

A timeless tale.

For the fifth straight year on Thursday, the [Read for the Record](#) campaign hopes to shatter the mark for the most people reading the same book on the same day, and more Hub library branches will host local read-along events in conjunction with the campaign than ever before, according to Koren Stemberidge, the [Boston Public Library's](#) director of partnerships.

Three years ago, children's librarian Kim McCleary of the North End branch (she has since moved to the Fields Corner branch) decided to sign the branch up for the Read for the Record day, Stemberidge said. The move prompted the library system to formally partner with the campaign's organizers last year, she said.

This year, 18 of [the 26 neighborhood branches citywide](#) and the Central branch will host gatherings of their own, including five that will have local politicians guest read.

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.

A year ago, more than 2 million children and adults worldwide, including over

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1,000 in Boston, nestled around copies of Eric Carle's "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" to set the **latest reading record** formerly held each year by those who participated in the organized readings of "Corduroy" in 2008, "The Story of Ferdinand" three years ago, and "The Little Engine That Could" in 2006.

The library's main event will be held at the Central branch in the city's Back Bay where Mayor Thomas M. Menino will be the guest reader to area preschoolers.

"Jumpstart's high quality literacy effort is helping to change the lives of the city's youngest citizens, and is setting an example for effectively building school readiness," said Menino in a statement, according to Jumpstart.

The organization serves 45 city preschools and almost all will participate in this year's Read for the Record, including 10 that will host corporate sponsors, said Susan Werley, executive director of Jumpstart's Northeast Region.

"In the process, Jumpstart intends to help draw attention to the growing crisis in early childhood education in America: Today half of children from low-income neighborhoods start school one-two years behind their peers," said an event press release. "When these children start behind, they stay behind."

The day-long campaign, which is officially kicked off on NBC's Today Show, is commemorated with reading events organized by individuals, schools, libraries, government organizations and local businesses. Thursday's goal is to get 2.2 million people to read "The Snowy Day."

"Reading and engaging with a child before he or she even enters kindergarten can improve his or her chances of graduating from high school by as much as 30 percent," said the release.

New to this year's Read for the Record, participants can also [read the book online](#), for free. Each time someone reads this classic story on the website either on or prior to October 7 the Pearson Foundation will donate a new children's book to a pre-school classroom Jumpstart serves.

In its five years, the campaign has reached more than 3 million children and more than 750,000 books have been donated to children in low-income neighborhoods.

*The following is a schedule of Read for the Record events planned at Boston Public Library branches:*

**10 a.m.**

- Central (Back Bay)
- Faneuil (Brighton)

**10:30 a.m.**

- Connolly (Jamaica Plain)
- Egleston Square (Roxbury/Jamaica Plain)
- Fields Corner (Dorchester)
- Roslindale
- Adams Street (Dorchester)
- East Boston
- Mattapan
- North End

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**3:30 p.m.**

- West Roxbury

**4 p.m.**

- Parker Hill (Mission Hill/Roxbury)

**4:30 p.m.**

- Hyde Park

**5 p.m.**

- Grove Hall (Dorchester)

**6 p.m.**

- Orient Heights (East Boston)
- Uphams Corner (Dorchester)
- Codman Square (Dorchester)

**6:30 p.m.**

- Jamaica Plain
- Dudley (Roxbury)

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(Courtesy Jumpstart)

A photo from last year's record setting reading of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle.

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