WCNS donates books to orphans at annual sleepover

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Good books were made even better through the act of good will on the eve of May 2.

That night, pajama-clad tots from Wilmette Community Nursery School returned to school after dark, listening to their favorite stories and making a donation to Bookwallah — an organization that brings books to orphaned children around the globe.

Spearheaded by WCNS parents Karin and Chetan Ghai, of Wilmette, the event has become a school favorite, inspiring all involved to think about children who could benefit from the comfort of a good story.

“Bookwallah is a wonderful organization that gives children who’ve been hurt, abused, orphaned or traumatized in any way the gift of a good story,” Karin Ghai said. “Most of these children live India, Ghana or Indonesia so, we are opening our children’s eyes to cultures outside of their own, showing how our good deeds here in Wilmette will impact other children far away. While all book donations are accepted, Bookwallah appreciates books that highlight a character overcoming adversity; ones with a happily ever after, so children who are hurting know that there is hope.”

When the Ghais presented the idea to WCNS Director Ellen Knight, she jumped at the chance to add another social service initiative to the school’s list of people to help.

“An event like this one shows our children, first-hand, that even at a young age, they can make a difference,” Knight said. “Since Bookwallah was introduced last year, the concept of giving to this organization has become part of the culture here at WCNS. We have made cards and have engaged in thoughtful, age-appropriate discussions about how we can change lives for the better, by being kind. Bookwallah, along with other important causes like collecting food for local pantries and coats for refugee organizations, are a big part of our the WCNS community.”

As children, dressed in their jammies, snuggled with their favorite cuddly friends and each other, Knight and fellow teachers read stories aloud. Karin Ghai snuggled with her own children, Jamison, 5, and Grayson, 3, grateful to share the evening with a community of parents who value the joy of reading and the joy of giving.

“Thank you to everyone here tonight who donated books, giving children the chance to escape reality and find a safe place within the pages of a book,” she said.

For more information on Bookwallah visit https://www.bookwallah.org/. WCNS has also partnered with Booked youth bookstore in Evanston. To donate books contact info@bookedevanston.com (847) 701-5707 or pop in at 506 Main St., Evanston.

eden lehn (left) and Hudson Lawler enjoy the festivities at the annual Bookwallah event May 2 at Wilmette Community Nursery School. PHOTOS BY ALEXA BURNELL/22ND CENTURY MEDIA

Kate and Stellan White listen to a story.