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Young poets get to see their work in print

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VINELAND -- Within minutes of picking up her hot-off-the-press volume of poetry, Sarah Gibney had a page number committed to memory.

"Page 29," she told her Sacred Heart Grammar School classmates gathered in Principal Pat DeMartino's office, unleashing a flurry of page flicking.

Third-graders devoted their talents to the limerick chapter of "Heart and Soul" -- the just-released poetry anthology paying homage to the important things in life - moms and dads, best friends and pets.

Friday's book distribution was the culmination of a four-month "Kidzpoetz" writing project that encompassed all grade levels. The program offered by poet Robert W. Kukela helped transform the students' musings into precious keepsakes.

Kukela, author of "Lillies on the Moon," visited the well-versed child writers back in September to encourage them to put their thoughts to paper. These works were collected, assembled and are now featured in a soft-cover book selling for \$20. There are currently 180 first editions in circulation, most headed home to be Christmas presents for parents.

First-grader Christopher Becker found his contribution, "I am a Poem," on page 14.

He was impressed.

"Did I write this?" he asked.

DeMartino applauded the end result, noting the project promoted creativity, exposed students to different writing styles and encouraged critical thinking.

Looking as his first published project, third-grader Dennis Campanella proved to be a frugal wordsmith: "Awesome," he said.

[Zoom Photo](#)



Staff photo/Charles J. Olson

Sacred Heart students wrote poems for a published collection. Sarah Gibney, 8 (left), and Sean Becker, 6, students at Sacred Heart Elementary School in Vineland, search for their writings.

STORYCHAT

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