

this picture book

life

Reading to Kids in Los Angeles

[DISPATCH FROM DANIELLE](#)

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Since my birthday was over the weekend, I had a chance to reflect on the year behind me (and one ahead!). One of the best things about the last year for me has been that Saturday morning each month when I volunteer with [Reading to Kids](#). It's something I'm excited to continue with this year.

Why? Because I get to read to kids. And then craft with kids. And, with the other volunteers, make an impact on children in Los Angeles. It's a privilege to be a small part of what this incredible organization is doing.

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Last Saturday I recruited my [dude](#) to join me, reading and crafting [Creepy Carrots!](#) with second graders. We had a group of four sweet kids and it was a blast!



There were googly eyes galore, good conversations about the story and illustrations, and at the end of the morning, all the kids who attended got to see a magic show!



Every single Saturday morning is a meaningful experience. Sometimes, you get to see a glimmer of understanding. Sometimes you get to affirm a child's talents. Sometimes you have a breakthrough with a kid who needs some extra attention.

R2K started in 1999 and now averages [over 800 kids attending each month](#) at a handful of elementary schools around LA. That's parents bringing their kids, not because they have to, but because they value the [reading clubs](#). And while the kids are being read to by pairs of volunteers, their parents receive encouragement about the importance of reading to children at home.

Each kid also gets a prize book to take with them, which is pretty cool and something they get super excited about! (And for some of them, these are the only books they own.) That's 800 books given out every month for each and every one of them to start or add to a library at home.



Let's just say a Kindergartner comes to the program and keeps coming most of the time until she graduates fifth grade. That child could be read to and crafted with over 50 times! 50 books, 50 crafts, 50 Saturday mornings focused on literacy, learning, art-making, communicating, and building self-esteem. Pretty cool, right?



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I typically choose which grade to work with based on the book they're reading. And since teachers at participating schools pick, there are some really great choices!

I've read [Cats' Night Out](#), [I Saw a Peacock with a Fiery Tail](#), [Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale](#), [A Home for Bird](#), and [The Year of Billy Miller](#) over my Saturdays reading to kids so far.



Not everyone has space in their lives for volunteering, but if you're in L.A., I highly recommend Reading to Kids, even if you only sign up once or organize a volunteer opportunity with your school or business or other group as a special activity.

Plus, October is the [Reading to Kids annual fund drive](#).

And if you're not in L.A., maybe there's a similar literacy organization in your area. It's an everybody wins kind of thing.

Thanks to [Todd Davis](#) for first 4 images and [Reading to Kids](#) for the rest!