



National Education Association - New Mexico

Great Public Schools Begin With Us!

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Reading Celebration Led by Premiere Storyteller

This year's NEA-New Mexico "Read Across America" celebration of literacy is led by Joe Hayes, award winning storyteller and recently named New Mexico's Centennial Storyteller. The annual reading celebration on March 2nd commemorates the birthday of Dr. Seuss (aka Theodore Geisel), author of some of the most widely read and famous children's books. Initiated in 1997 by the National Education Association, Read Across America has grown into a nationwide observance on the importance of reading in the social and academic life of every child with the understanding that while the official celebration is March 2nd, EVERY day should be Read Across America day for our children.

Here in New Mexico, Joe Hayes and The Cat in the Hat will visit the New Mexico House of Representatives on Monday, February 28, 2011 where Santa Fe Representative Jim Trujillo will read and present a congratulatory certificate kicking off NEA Read Across America week. While celebrations of reading (including the requisite cooking of green eggs and ham) will take place all across New Mexico and the country, Hayes and the Cat will join 25 Santa Fe community readers including Mayor David Coss, Superintendent Bobbie Gutierrez, and Secretary of Education Hanna Skandera at Aspen School on March 2, 2011. The morning festivities include a celebrity reader in each classroom, an assembly complete with birthday cake for all and the singing of the NEA-New Mexico Read Across America song, "Leer, Leer" ("To Read, To Read").

"Every year for the last decade or so, NEA- New Mexico has invited a prominent New Mexican to chair this annual celebration," said Sharon Morgan, President of NEA-NM. "Who could be better than Joe Hayes to promote literacy to our New Mexico students? He has captured the essence of our multi-cultural, multi-lingual heritage in his many stories and cuentos. His stories are fun, interesting, heartfelt and timeless. I have watched him hold a roomful of children spellbound as he brings his stories to life. He's been a favorite of mine, not only as a teacher, but as a mother and now grandmother," Morgan continued.

Hayes began his career as a teacher in Los Alamos and credits his storytelling start to a workshop he presented at an NEA-NM "Teachers" Convention in the 1970s. Soon after mastering the art of storytelling, he began to publish his award winning books, such as "*The Day it Snowed Tortillas*" and "*Ghost Fever*."

Hayes joins a noteworthy group of New Mexicans who have lent their time and talents to lead NEA-NM's annual celebration such as; author Rudolfo Anaya, artist Edward Gonzales, TV personality Steve Stucker, musician/performer Al Hurricane, and the late newsman Ernie Mills.

For more information on NEA's Read Across America celebration, suggested activities, materials and ideas please visit www.nea-nm.org.