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## Kindergartners Publish Their Own Work in Award-winning Project

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What does it take to become a published author? For 12 kindergartners from Tuvia School at Temple Menorah in Redondo Beach, all it took was a dedicated teacher who recognized the value of teaching writing skills and creativity to her students. Lauren Adler, a teaching veteran of 20 years, was awarded a grant from the California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC). She was one of only two early-childhood education professionals in California to win the \$500 Beth A. Lake award for her young authorship proposal. Adler's project gave her students the opportunity to write, illustrate and publish their own stories.

Adler started by teaching the students basic story structure, writing techniques, and art and illustration. Once they had drafted their stories, they were ready for the highlight of the project — a field trip to Scribble Press in Santa Monica, where they watched and participated as their stories were printed and bound into hardcover books.

"It's a huge deal for anyone to say they are a published author, let alone a 5-year-old," Adler said. "Everyone took great pride in their finished products and in becoming successful, published writers." As a result, according to Adler, all of her students improved their reading and writing skills and gained confidence in both subjects. When asked what she thought of her book, student Zaria Ackermann, 5, said, "When I read my book I feel happy because it's mine and I wrote it myself!"

In addition to writing the individual stories, the students worked on two collaborative books, "Keshet's ABC Book" and "Keshet's Aleph-Bet Book." These books will remain in the classroom as permanent additions to the kindergarten library.

The authorship studies program continued with students writing special poems and stories about their grandparents. The project culminated on Grandparents Day with students reading their work aloud to a gathering of more than 150 grandparents, friends and relatives.

"It was sheer joy," Adler said, "to see the pride on the grandparents' faces as they listened to their grandchildren read."

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