

**CONTACT:** Jennifer Saltzman, 704-222-6933, or [jsaltzman@firstbookcharlotte.org](mailto:jsaltzman@firstbookcharlotte.org)

**Dr. Peter Gorman to Speak on the Importance of Literacy and Access to Books**

*First Book-Charlotte distributes new, free books to students at Pinewood Elementary as Part of the "Capture The Magic" student art competition*

Charlotte, North Carolina--On Wednesday, April 25, Dr. Peter Gorman will speak at the "Capture The Magic" art competition and book distribution event at Pinewood Elementary School. The presentation, which will take place at 11:30 a.m. in the Pinewood Elementary School library, will feature an awards ceremony for winners of a student art competition, along with the distribution of free, new books to every student at Pinewood Elementary, courtesy of a grant from the non-profit First Book- Charlotte.

At the event Dr. Gorman is expected to comment on the importance of literacy in our society, the impact that access to books can make on the life of a child and the value that public/private partnerships bring to the community.

This is the second in a series of three book distributions for Pinewood Elementary School as part of the First Book-Charlotte grant. Each child will receive a third book in June of this year.

"Access to books is essential to reading development, said Colleen Ludington, children's book author and Chairperson of First Book-Charlotte. However, 61% of low-income families have no books for children in their homes. What a grant like this can do for the students at Pinewood Elementary is extremely valuable, said Ludington." According to national statistics obtained by the First Book national organization, over 80% of childcare centers serving low-income children lack age-appropriate books and other print materials. "By providing children from low-income families with books they can take home and keep, First Book targets the only variable that correlates significantly with reading scores--the number of books in the home, said Ludington."

The estimated retail value of the books distributed at Pinewood is approximately \$5,000.00. On average, for every \$1 donated to First Book, \$10 worth of books is provided to a child in need.

On May 12, First Book-Charlotte will be hosting its inaugural Gala and Auction fundraising event, at which time the winning students from Pinewood Elementary will be recognized and their artwork displayed. The event will be held at [ImaginOn](http://www.imaginson.com).

**About First Book-Charlotte**

First Book-Charlotte works to promote and facilitate the distribution of new books to underserved children in a variety of literacy programs in the Charlotte area. Through several community fundraisers, First Book-Charlotte raises funds in order to award book grants to community-based literacy programs. First Book-Charlotte is part of First Book's national network of volunteer-led Advisory Boards who provide new books to children in need in communities across the country. Local recipient groups have included: Starfish Academy, Brookstone Schools, Thompson Child & Family

Focus, A Child's Place, Pinewood Elementary School, and Montclair Elementary School.

**About First Book**

First Book is a nonprofit organization with a single mission: to give children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. Through hundreds of local Advisory Boards, the First Book National Book Bank, and the First Book Marketplace, the organization provides an ongoing supply of new books to children participating in community-based mentoring, tutoring, and family literacy programs. First Book has provided more than 46 million new books to children in need in thousands of communities nationwide. For more information about First Book, please visit [www.FirstBook.org](http://www.FirstBook.org) or call 866-393-1222.