

Local Sixth Grader Leads Community Wide Children's Book Drive 'Read & Rise' in Celebration of Global Youth Service Day

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, May 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Sunday, April 27, 11-year-old Alice Klingman, a 6th grade student at IS 141 The Steinway School, celebrated Global Youth Service Day by distributing free children's books with a group of volunteers to local families at the 2025 International Cultural Festival, hosted by Central Astoria LDC. This event marked the public culmination of Read & Rise, a youth-led literacy initiative Alice launched after receiving the 2025 Hershey Heartwarming Young Hero's Grant from Youth Service America.

Over the month of April, Alice mobilized more than 25 volunteers to help carry out her project, from designing flyers, collecting, sorting, boxing, and delivering donated books across the community. Together, they gathered over 1,000 donated books from collection bins placed at PS 2, PS 70, PS 84, IS 141, and Alice's youth basketball league at Immaculate Conception in Astoria.



Left to Right: Ian Klingman, Lancine Conde, Projekt NYC Executive Director Ted Psahos, Grei Veliaj, Briona Shaholli, Melisa Veliaj, Alice Klingman, Tanzim Tanim, Syed Alam, Mohammed Malek Taha

“

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Ted Psahos

“I believe every kid should have books at home so they can read whenever they want,” said Alice Klingman. “Books help us do better at school, and I hope kids who got books from us will feel that way too. I'm so grateful for everyone who helped.”

Books were also distributed to Little Free Libraries

throughout Astoria, Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, Corona,

and Maspeth. Eight boxes were donated to The Book Fairies, which redistributes books to under-resourced schools and nonprofits across Long Island, New York City, and internationally. Five boxes were given to family shelters in Brooklyn.

Alice chose Global Youth Service Day, the largest annual youth-led day of service worldwide, as the perfect date for her public service project, aligning her personal passion for reading with a global movement for youth action.

The project was supported and made possible by [Projekt NYC](#), a local nonprofit that connects middle and high school students throughout NYC to community service, education, and leadership opportunities. Projekt NYC introduced Alice to the grant, assisted her with the application, and supported her with volunteer coordination and project planning.

"Alice didn't just start a book drive, she built a movement," said Ted Psahos, Executive Director of Projekt NYC. "This was a team effort, but it was Alice's vision and leadership that made Read & Rise happen. She's shown that middle schoolers can make a real difference when given the tools and encouragement to lead and we are grateful for the outpouring of support she received from the Astoria community."

Alice and Projekt NYC extend heartfelt thanks to the Hershey Foundation and Youth Service America for funding the initiative, the school administrators, basketball coaches, and parents who supported the collection efforts, and Central Astoria LDC for hosting Read & Rise at the festival.

To support future youth-led service projects like Read & Rise or to get involved, please go to projektnyc.org or email Projekt NYC at projektnyc@gmail.com.

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