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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fourth Graders at Westside Hear a WONDER-ful Message from Jonathan Siebert

Kimberly, Wis. – May 25, 2018 – Fourth graders in Rena Christensen’s class at [Westside Elementary School](#) have been working on spreading kindness this school year. Christensen and the class read R.J. Palacio’s novel [“Wonder.”](#) They were so moved by the story’s messages around kindness and overcoming challenges, that when they learned about Jonathan Siebert, a public speaker who was born with a similar facial condition to the main character in “Wonder,” the class jumped at the chance to Skype with him.



Jonathan Siebert speaking with fourth graders at Westside Elementary School.

Siebert, who lives near Houston, Texas, said that his life has been changed by “Wonder.” To Siebert, the themes of the book had similarities with his own personal experiences. The concept of spreading kindness resonated so deeply with him that he has been working very hard to help spread those messages. His drive to spread kindness is so powerful that he has a personal goal to speak with students in all 50 states. So far he has spoken with

schools in 48 states, which now includes the [Kimberly Area School District](#) in Wisconsin.

During their Skype event, Siebert shared his personal story and message about choosing kindness with fourth graders. Students were able to ask him questions. They asked about how he overcame challenges in his life,

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such as medical obstacles and the mistreatment he has experienced. The fourth graders were also very interested in what brings Siebert joy, such as what he hopes to do in the future and what sport teams he likes. Siebert hopes to one day become a 4th grade teacher.



Students in Rena Christensen's class asking questions about what Siebert hopes to do in the future.

One topic that Siebert kept referring back to as his ultimate favorite, was “Wonder.” Our community is especially familiar

with “Wonder” as it was selected as the Fox Cities Reads book of 2014. It was #1 New York Times bestseller and was made into a major motion picture in 2017. The book has sold over 6 million copies and received over 25 literary awards.

During [“The Great Kindness Challenge”](#) in February, students at [Westside organized many activities](#) focused on performing as many acts of kindness as possible. Each day of the week, they planned different activities to spread kindness, such as “smile and say something nice to 25 people today.” It’s no wonder this book and speaker has a message that resonated with these fourth graders.

About the Kimberly Area School District

The Kimberly Area School District is a progressive public school district committed to providing the best possible education available to students. Its responsibility is to help lead the way in developing well-rounded students and future citizens. The District wants every student to be given the opportunity to reach their potential through academics, the arts and co-curricular activities. It encompasses approximately 17 square miles and serves over 5,100 students in one 4K center, four elementary schools (5K-4), two intermediate schools (5-6), one middle school (7-8) and one high school (9-12). To learn more about the Kimberly Area School District, call (920)788-7900 or visit www.kimberly.k12.wi.us.