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Read Across America 2021 Why(r)us the Virus

Having fun, Staying Safe

Leesburg, VA (March 1 2021) – Local author and illustrator Kathleen Finnegan is reading her book, “Why(r)us the Virus” for this year’s Read for America program for a school in Oklahoma. “I was approached by the teacher about presenting the book to her first grade students. Since we were doing it by video I thought it made sense to post the video I made for them on YouTube for any other teacher to use as well.”

In addition to the reading of the book, Finnegan has posted a short video on why and how she wrote the book for the first graders, showing portions of her many versions and stressing how many people helped her make the book better. “The students had discussed the process of writing a book with their teacher, and she asked me if I could talk about what I experienced as well as reading the book for them. I was delighted to do so.”

In July 2020, Ms. Finnegan released her book in English, followed quickly by versions in German, Spanish and French. “Wonderful friends from our years in Europe as an Air Force family offered to translate the book into multiple languages as a way for them to give back to their European communities, and they did a beautiful job. “Why(r)us das Virus” (translated by German native Angie Reth of Maryland) and “Why(r)us le Virus” (translated by French native Sophie Thompson of Florida) were published in December 2020, followed by “Why(r)us El Virus” (translated by Andrea Montgomery, CCI, CT, of Maryland) in January of 2021. Each are available in electronic and print versions.

In addition, two teachers and an epidemiologist donated their services to create several lesson plans incorporating the book. Breana Murad of Maryland and Mikaela and Josh Nazlian of North Carolina collaborated to provide two lesson plans: a simple one page plan that facilitates discussion of the book with young readers, and a five day Why(r)us Week lesson plan that incorporates additional information that includes art projects, pledges and reinforces actions that can prevent the spread of a virus. These are free to the public, and available at the website <https://www.whyrusthevirus.com> in addition to coloring pages and other activities. "If we can open a dialog with young children about the pandemic, we have the opportunity to reassure them" offers Finnegan. "Unless you give them the opportunity to ask questions, you may not know that they are worried."

The book is available in ebook, paperback and hardback formats at most online book retailers including Amazon, Barnes&Noble, BooksAMillion, Apple Books, Google Play Books and Waterstones (search by the author Kathleen Finnegan). Finnegan has pledged to donate a portion

of the profits from the sale of the book to Mobile Hope of Loudoun, a non-profit that assists homeless and at-risk children, where she had been volunteering prior to the pandemic

Finnegan and her husband have lived in Leesburg for over 20 years, and their four children graduated from Loudoun County Public Schools. She worked at Dodona Manor (the George Marshall House) during its restoration, then worked in IT for both Loudoun County Public Schools and the Town of Leesburg before retiring in 2018.

For more information, please visit <https://www.whyrusthevirus.com/>.



