



For Immediate Release
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Media Release

Jerry Zucker Middle School Students Produce Literary Book

**Jerry Zucker Middle School of
Science**

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Charleston, SC – The words, artwork, spirit, and energy of students at Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science will forever be memorialized in their bi-annual production of the ZuckerBook. This student publication of literary works is the brainchild of Erik Hilden, an 8th grade ELA and Honors English 1 teacher.

It started with the notion of the undeniable excitement of students seeing their own works in print. He teamed up with a colleague and created an after-school class that produced a magazine of literary contributions and art.

During the 2012-2013 school year, it evolved into an actual book, funded solely by Hilden and his colleague. But the excitement fizzled when a call to join the after-school project the following year failed to garner interest.

Undeterred, Hilden regrouped and with the blessing of Principal Jacob Perlmutter, created an elective class. It was a way to run the ZuckerBook with enough students to staff a small company dedicated to the cause.

It has been a success, and today the class is divided into teams – fundraising, internal production, external production, and public relations. From costs and budgets to raising funds and awareness, each student plays a crucial role in ZuckerBook's output. Students across the entire school are encouraged to submit their work as well.

"It was a learning experience for myself and my staff, and we all grew as a result," said Hilden. "It's amazing. I never thought we'd produce a real paperback book. I am very impressed with what we have."

Hilden raised money to purchase a professional, creative software suite, computers, and equipment. Several students typeset copy, scan in artwork and paginate the latest edition. Others handle social media while another team handles advertising and brand awareness.

Citlali Avila Sanchez is head of the "Art Department." She joined the class to learn about the publishing aspect because she hopes one day to become an author. She

and three other students produce posters and advertisements for the book. Her artwork is featured on the Chapter Head pages.

"It's an important role because we have to produce good posters so people will want to buy the book," she said. "It's exciting to see people anticipating the release of the book. We get feedback from the students and use that as inspiration for the next book."

Sicilia Benjamin works alongside Sanchez in the Art Department. She handles the scanning for the book. She joined because of her interests in writing and drawing. She hopes to one day become an animator.

"I take pride in creating a book that others will read and enjoy," she said.

Today the book averages just over 200 pages and is filled with stories, poetry, fairy tales, the occasional editorial, and art.

Three grants help to fund the bi-annual production as well as a [GoFundMe](#) account and individual donations. It costs upwards of \$2,000 to produce the book. Sales from the book go back into producing the next book.

The next edition will be released in January and is available for \$15. This year the students will publish and release Volume 9 and 10. The book is available in four bookstores: Blue Bicycle Books, Mr. K's, and two Education Station stores. It is also available at [lulu.com](#).

"The point of ZuckerBook is to engage students in reading and writing, and there is nothing I can think of more engaging than seeing your work in a book," said Hilden. "I'm excited that we've come as far as we have and I don't see an end in sight."

To learn more or donate to the ZuckerBook Project, contact Erik Hilden at erik_hilden@charleston.k12.sc.us. A Stories of CCSD feature about the project is available on [YouTube](#).

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools that span 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 86 schools and specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.