

## Berries For Books Delivers Books To Preschoolers In Southeast DC

Great Falls resident Samantha Grayer's charity, Berries for Books, aims to improve literacy among preschoolers in Southeast D.C.



[Michael O'Connell](#), Patch Staff

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Great Falls resident Samantha Grayer reads a book to 3-year-old students at Easterseals Child Development Center in Washington, D.C. on Aug. 18. Grayer is the founder of the Berries for Books charity. (Courtesy of Samantha Grayer)

GREAT FALLS, VA — Samantha Grayer, a rising junior at Langley High School in McLean, handed out books on Aug. 18 to a class of 3-year-olds at the Easterseals Child Development Center in Washington, D.C.

"I will be providing one copy of the same book for each of the students, and we'll be reading that book together," the Great Falls resident told Patch a few days before the event. "After that, we'll also be making chocolate covered strawberries together and decorating them, which I'm very excited for."

In 2022, Grayer founded [Berries for Books](#), a 501(c)(3) charity benefiting elementary students living in Ward 8 in Southeast D.C. Students there have a reading proficiency rate of 11 percent and Grayer [launched her charity](#) to help improve that number.

To finance the operation, Grayer sold and delivered decorated strawberries to people throughout the Washington, D.C. area. She also accepted donations of new, age-appropriate books.

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**Related:** [Berries For Books: Sweet Way To Promote Literacy In DC's Ward 8](#)

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The book-reading and strawberry-decorating event was Berries for Books' first partnership activity with Easterseals, a relationship that Grayer described as "amazing."

The Child Development Center in D.C. serves children from ages 6-months to 5-years, so Grayer made sure that each of those students received an age-appropriate book as well.



Samantha Grayer, founder of Berries for Books, decorates strawberries with 3-year-old students at the Easterseals Child Development Center in Washington, D.C. (Courtesy of Samantha Grayer)

"We are also have another initiative of installing little free libraries for elementary schools in the DMV area," she said. "Right now, I'm currently in contact and have confirmed with elementary schools that we'll be putting them. I'm also receiving more responses every day, which is also very exciting."

The libraries will be installed and stocked with new books at no-cost to the school.

In addition to running a nonprofit, Grayer plays travel soccer and plays soccer at Langley High School. She's also the yearbook editor and editor-in-chief of the literary magazine.

"This initiative, especially the little free libraries, definitely going to go into the school year," she said. "It doesn't seem to be incredibly time consuming, so I'm comfortable that I'll be able to manage it."

Last year, Berries for Books had donation boxes set up around the DMV area for people to drop off books. Anyone who has books to donate can contact Grayer at [BerriesForBooks.org](http://BerriesForBooks.org).

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