

Scituate students write books documenting their lives during COVID



By Ruth Thompson | Wicked Local
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Every spring third graders at Jenkins Elementary School get to complete their own hardcover book. This year, the topic was the COVID pandemic, and the students' experiences with remote learning, being separated from their friends, mask wearing and returning to in-person learning.

"This year, Mrs. Hallin's class wrote nonfiction books about animals, sports, or other topics, and Mrs. Masterson's class wrote 'How So' stories about

why the giraffe has a long neck, why the zebra has stripes, etc.," said third grade teacher Alisa Johnson. "I thought it would be a unique opportunity for my class to create their own version of the 'I Survived' series by Lauren Tarshis. We called our books, 'I Survived the Pandemic of 2020-2021.'"

Johnson had read, "I Survived the Great Molasses Flood of 1919," one of the books in Tarshis' series, to her class.

"This is a fascinating history of an event in Boston that covered a neighborhood in molasses and was extremely destructive," she said. "Lauren Tarshis was



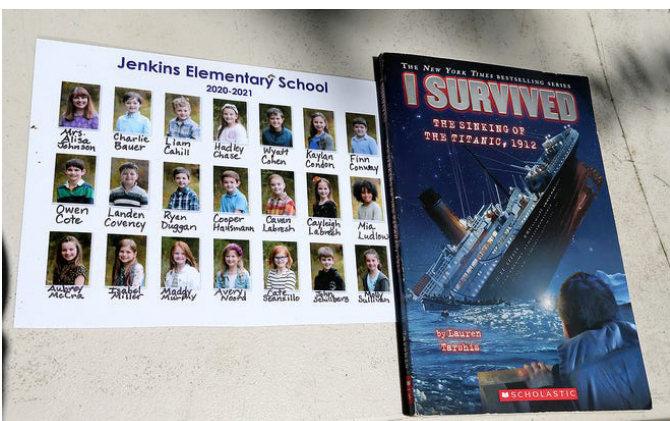
Jenkins Elementary School third graders Cayleigh Labresh, Molly Sullivan, Kaylan Condon, and Charlie Bauer show off their "I Survived" books.

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actually a guest speaker at Jenkins a few years ago, which was amazing."

Some of the other books in the series Johnson said her students enjoyed included "I Survived the Sinking of the Titanic, 1912," "I Survived the San Francisco Earthquake, 1906," and "I Survived the Destruction of Pompeii, AD 79."

The class started their book project by writing about their experiences with remote learning back in March of second grade, their different kinds of summer, the return to school with masks and separated desks in the fall, and third grade fun activities, Johnson said.



The Jenkins School project is based on a popular book series, called "I Survived."

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"They wrote rough drafts for their entire books first, then revised, edited, and created a final product just like professional authors. I was truly impressed by the details in both their writing and illustrations."

For Ryan Duggan, taking part in the project "was really cool and fun."

He wrote about "snowshoeing, going on the boat, and going to Gloucester to a rooftop pool."

He also enjoyed "I Survived the Sinking of the Titanic, 1912."



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Many of the students' books included the difficult things about the pandemic like wearing masks, sitting in rows of desks, and feeling anxious, Johnson said.

"However, the wonderful things were also mentioned like seeing a bunny in the bushes during our outdoor snack, having great family experiences, and being able to be with their friends."

Student Charlie Bauer said he "really enjoyed" the project.

"My favorite part about it was when I wrote about all the fun outdoor activities we did over the summer like camping, boating and hiking," he said. "I wrote all about my family's experiences and fun indoor and outdoor activities we did."

He also enjoyed reading the stories his classmates wrote.

"I thought it was awesome," said John Schillberg, another of Johnson's students. "I made a whole book out of COVID. I talked about where I was when I first heard about COVID. I wrote about what we did in school because of COVID, too."

His favorite book in the series was "the book about surviving a grizzly bear attack."

Johnson felt the students' books could be passed down through the generations.

"So their own children and grandchildren would better understand what it was like for a child to live through a pandemic."



Jenkins Elementary School students Aubrey Sylvia and Kaylan Condon read their "I Survived" books.

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