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September 30, 2010

**Deaf Children to Receive a Helping Hand from Renowned ASL Performing Artist for
Jumpstart's *Read for the Record* Global Literacy Campaign**

Breakthrough American Sign Language Storyteller Keith Wann Offers ASL Performance of Classic
Children's Book *The Snowy Day*

Suffolk, VA— Cherished American Sign Language (ASL) Storyteller and Performing Artist Keith Wann, is lending a hand to children within the deaf community in conjunction with the Florida Lottery, Florida Department of Education and the Volunteer USA Foundation, for the worldwide literacy awareness movement *Read for the Record* on October 7th. Jumpstart's *Read for the Record*, presented in partnership with the Pearson Foundation, is striving to set a new world record by having millions of children and adults read the same book, on the same day. The event raises awareness about the importance of early literacy skills, and how essential these skills are to a child's success in school and in life. Adults and children will gather the world over to share a reading of this year's official campaign book, *The Snowy Day* by acclaimed author Ezra Jack Keats.

Wann will be appearing in a live interactive and streaming performance of *The Snowy Day* at the [Safety Harbor Public Library](#) at 10:00 am on October 7th. The event venue is part of the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative, which houses one of the largest deaf libraries in the state of Florida. Keith's performance will be accessible in live access, for all interested parties through the following link <https://live.fsdb.k12.fl.us/dfla>.

“The Pearson Foundation is delighted to share Wann's ASL video with children and adults in the hard of hearing and deaf community,” said Kathy Hurley, Senior Vice President of Strategic Partnerships for Pearson. “We are committed to including as many people as possible in this day of service and Mr. Wann's ASL version of *The Snowy Day* provides one more way to expand the reach of *Read for the Record*.”

Performing artist Keith Wann, renowned for his ASL advocacy and stand-up comedy among deaf and Coda (Children of Deaf Adults) society, has performed and produced an American Sign Language version of *The Snowy Day* for deaf participants in schools, libraries, homes, communities and other institutions of learning. Free access to Wann's ASL video can be found on You Tube, KeithWann.com, Volunteer USA, [Jumpstart](#) and [Pearson Foundation](#) websites. Wann's ASL video will also be distributed to all school districts in Florida through the Florida Knowledge Network.

When asked about the importance of Wann's role in broadening the ASL community's access to the *Read for the Record* event, Education Commissioner, Dr. Eric J. Smith said, “I'm thrilled that the Department of Education is able to use the Florida Knowledge Network to share this special video with students throughout the state. *The Snowy Day* is a fantastic story and this effort by Mr. Wann creates the perfect opportunity for more of our families to take advantage of such an enriching experience.”

Wann's ASL performance version of the treasured book [The Very Hungry Caterpillar](#) by Eric Carle was informally self-released on You Tube and Facebook last year, as a way for deaf children to participate in 2009's *Read for the Record* campaign. The video garnered an estimated 50,000 hits worldwide and was seen by children in countries like Haiti.



ASL Comedian Keith Wann

About Keith:

Recognized as the founder of coda365.org, producer of the [ASL Comedy Tour](#) with wife Emilia, YouTube Travel Channels' *ASL Across America* and manager of interpreter video service company callVRS.org, Wann is acclaimed as the funniest and most diverse ASL comedian on the circuit. He has become a leading force in allowing the deaf community to experience entertainment and programming from a hearing point of view. Picking up exposure from media outlets on shows like NPR's [Here and Now](#), Wann's notoriety among the ASL and hearing audiences, has led to a constantly growing following on Facebook, YouTube and Educational Organization Partnerships to enhance service for the deaf. Wann and his wife were recently the beneficiaries of a rare compliment, when they were asked to interpret beloved musical classic, *West Side Story* on Broadway in New York. Captivating his live audience with a fresh spin on cultural diversity through performances, Wann also engages his listeners in meaningful, serious and comedic discussions. ASL's breakthrough talk radio host of the *Keith Wann Show*, as he bridges the gap between his two native worlds. Wann currently resides in Florida with his wife and two children.

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About Jumpstart

Jumpstart's mission is to ensure that all children in America enter school prepared to succeed. Year-round, Jumpstart recruits and trains thousands of college students and community volunteers to work with preschool children in low-income neighborhoods, helping them to develop the language, literacy, and social skills they need to succeed in school and in life. Since 1993, more than 70,000 preschool children across America have benefited from millions of hours of Jumpstart service. Jumpstart's national sponsors include American Eagle Outfitters, AmeriCorps, Pearson, and Franklin Templeton Investments. Jumpstart is the five-time recipient of the Fast Company/Monitor Social Capitalist Award (2004-2008) and has received a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator.

Jumpstart's **Read for the Record**®, presented in partnership with Pearson, is a world record breaking campaign that brings together children and adults to read the same book, on the same day. On October 7, adults will read Ezra Jack Keats's *The Snowy Day* to more than two million children. Celebrating its fifth year, Jumpstart's **Read for the Record**®, harnesses the power of reading by bringing together children and adults to read the same book, on the same day to fight the early education crisis. For more information, visit the Jumpstart Web site at www.jstart.org.

About the Pearson Foundation

Pearson, the international education and information company, is Jumpstart's Read for the Record's Sponsor and Founding Partner. The Pearson Foundation extends Pearson's commitment to education by partnering with leading nonprofit, civic, and business organizations to provide financial, organizational, and publishing assistance across the globe. The Foundation aims to make a difference by sponsoring innovative educational programs and extending its educational expertise to help in classrooms and in local communities. For more information, visit www.pearsonfoundation.org.

About We Give Books

We Give Books (www.wegivebooks.org) is a new philanthropic program from Penguin and the Pearson Foundation that helps your child become a lifelong reader and giver. Together, we support literacy through programs that engage entire communities. Working around the world through programs like Booktime and Jumpstart's Read for the Record, Penguin and the Pearson Foundation have touched millions of lives in thousands of communities.