



May 27, 2022

Like many children's book authors and illustrators, I've seen the news reports out of Uvalde, Texas. And like many of you when you hear of these unspeakable tragedies, you struggle to find meaning in your work, thinking, How can I create stories while so many continue to suffer?

Then an article was sent to me last night about children's public librarian Martha Carreon. Every Wednesday at El Progreso Memorial Library in Uvalde, Mrs. Carreon does story time for young children. But she didn't know if she could do it that day. Less than 24 hours after the shooting.

But she did. And I thought wow. What strength to show up when it seems almost impossible. Mendall Morgan, the public library director, decided to keep the library open because a library is, "A refuge. A safe place. An escape."

And we all know that, because we write or publish the books for children who seek out that refuge, that safe place, that escape in libraries. We are the architects of story, of imagination, of humor, heart, and hope. And that is why I feel this is a moment where we can meet tragedy and heartache with compassion, kindness, and story.

600 Books of Hope is an opportunity for us as a community of artists and writers, along with the companies that publish us, to embrace the children of Robb Elementary School. My goal is to collect a minimum of 600 books of hope which would ensure that every child there would receive one book. One tangible thing they can take with them that might shine a ray of promise in their unbearable darkness.

My initial goal was to collect an additional 1,300 books to gift to the town's remaining K-6 schools: Anton Elementary, Benson Elementary, Dalton Elementary, and Sacred Heart, knowing they too suffer the consequences. We've now expanded that goal to additional books for middle grade and high school readers. This would allow for every school aged child in Uvalde to have at least one book, one token of hope to grab onto.

We can't undo the tragedy of what has happened at Robb Elementary School and to the town of Uvalde. But we can come together as a community of artists and publishers and offer them the best parts of what we do. We can share our words, our stories, our images, and, by doing so, shine some literary light into the darkness.

If you'd like to join this effort with me and my nonprofit Never Counted Out, fill out the Contact form below. We'll get back with you with shipping information.

Thanks Everyone,
e.E. Charlton-Trujillo