

# TURNING A LOVE OF ART INTO A LOVE OF READING

**A**lthough Hartford, CT Branch 86 member **Devon Torres** didn't have kids, he's had an idea for a children's book since his mid-20s. When he had children, his wife reminded him and encouraged him to try making the book a reality, so he did.

Torres, now 30, has been drawing since kindergarten and was voted "most artistic" in high school. It was nothing more than a hobby for most of his life, which he took a break from in his 20s due to work and life responsibilities.

His first and only book so far, *Freddy the Frog*, is designed to make reading engaging and fun. His biggest inspiration being Dr. Seuss books, he includes rhymes and fun use of color and word play in his book. "Engagement is a big thing for me," Torres said.

The nine-year letter carrier "worked [his] way little by little." He wrote the story first, then designed character prototypes and matched the imagery to the text carefully.

Torres chose a frog as the main character because of the opportunities it presented for "playful wording."

After he finished writing, illustrating and putting everything together, he then moved on to the book publishing process. He started with Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, then worked directly with printers. He didn't personally know anyone who had started a publishing company, so he learned from people on social media who had done so.

Torres said he "started looking at children... more in a family community perspective," after he had two daughters of his own, who are now 3 and 1. He felt drawn to not just nurturing his own children, but helping and encouraging all children.

"I kind of want to make a broader impact," he said.

In late November 2025, Torres received a local grant from the Urban

League in Hartford that helped him expand his business by providing funding to get more inventory.

To try to expand his reach, he contacted many local schools to see if they would be interested in purchasing copies of his book. If the schools accept, he provides a reading with a large group of children. The read-along is his way to demonstrate how teachers and students can engage with the book together. His first read-along was April 7, when he read to seven or eight classes at a school that had purchased 125 of his books.

"I feel that if I present the book in a certain way that the kids will be engaged, and maybe that'll make a positive impact on them and encourage them to read more," Torres said.

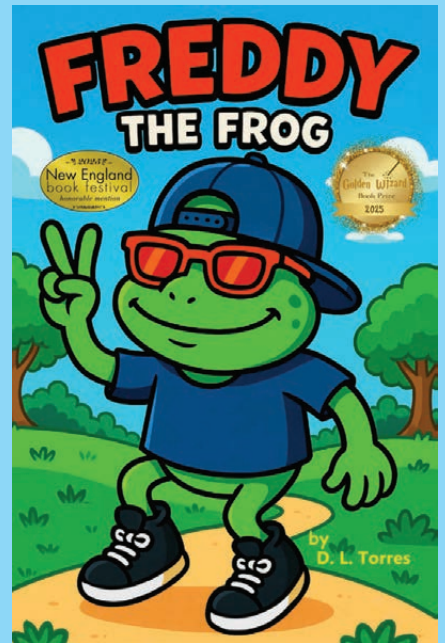
"Some teachers have called it a little bit clever," he added. "They chuckle at it and the kids sometimes smile."

In terms of community engagement, he is signing up to participate in as many book fairs as possible.

As a letter carrier, publisher and father, it can be difficult to balance all his responsibilities, but he tries to find time for everything. He is currently working on another book for his publishing company and already has it written, but doesn't "want to rush it."

In the future, he plans to expand his impact on young students, maybe putting on events and providing free school supplies, such as book bags, crayons and pencils.

Overall, the main "goal with my company is to make reading fun," Torres said. **PR**



Torres' book has received several awards.

The letter carrier has started to go to schools to do readings for kids.

