



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**“Diary of a Wimpy Kid” Children’s Author and Volunteer USA Foundation
Announce Celebration of Reading Student Writing Contest**

~ Jeff Kinney to Visit with Young Writers Who Spin a Stormy, Silly Tale~

Bonita Springs, FL - Volunteer USA Foundation and Jeff Kinney, a best-selling children’s author, are pleased to announce an entertaining writing contest open to students in southwest Florida. Kinney is well-known for his popular *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book series, which combine funny stories about growing up with doodles and cartoons.

“The greatest thing about Kinney’s books is that they make kids laugh – from the crazy situations his characters get involved with to his silly illustrations – he is hands-down a favorite among young readers,” said Liza McFadden, president of Volunteer USA. “We are thrilled this hugely popular children’s author will be on hand in 2012 to celebrate our talented young writers in southwest Florida and help us reward their talent and imagination.”

In Kinney’s recently released book, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever*, you find beloved character Greg Heffley snowed in for the holidays and laugh out loud at the family chaos the snowstorm creates. In our Florida-style contest, this year students in Lee, Charlotte, Collier, Hendry and Glades counties (grades 4 - 7) are invited to participate in the Celebration of Reading Student Writing Contest basing their work on a funny story involving Florida’s own storm season....from tropical storms to hurricane watches, this state has its fill of weather madness. Students may write an entertaining short story with simple illustrations or a comic strip based on the “storm watch” theme.

"As a resident of New England, I've weathered a number of storms that have turned my life upside down for days or even weeks. I've found that the best way to get through a tough situation is with a positive attitude and a good sense of humor. I'm very excited to read the contestants' essays on the 'storm watch' theme and to see how they inject humor into their work," said Kinney.

Contest winners, accompanied by their parents, will be recognized at a VIP breakfast, sponsored by Public Risk Insurance Agency of Brown & Brown, Inc. to kickoff Volunteer USA’s 12th Celebration of Reading event on February 17th, 2012. Celebration is an annual event hosted by former Governor Jeb Bush and his family to support successful family literacy programs in the southeast U.S. The students will be Kinney’s guests of honor at the Celebration breakfast and have the opportunity to visit with the entertaining author and share their winning submissions.

Entries are to be submitted electronically to Contest@VolunteerUSAFund.org OR postmarked no later than the **deadline of Wednesday, January 18, 2012** to: Volunteer USA Foundation - Attn: COR2012 Writing Contest- 516 North Adams Street - Tallahassee, Florida 3230. Fifteen winners will be selected based on their writing and imagination. They will be announced, in conjunction with Florida Celebrate Literacy Week, to schools and on Volunteer USA’s website at www.volunteerusafoundation.org on **January 27th**.

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