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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Slate Valley Students Launch 'Maple Mission' for Ukrainian Children

FAIR HAVEN, VT April 26, 2022 – When the children in the Orwell Village School (OVS) Fourth Grade started drawing pictures of the Ukrainian flag and writing messages of support for those caught up in the war, it seemed right to reach out and see what they might do to help.

After a librarian in Prague suggested sending candy, their minds turned to sugaring season here in Vermont and to a book the class had listened to as a read aloud, the Beatryce Prophecy by Kate DiCamillo. In the book, one of the characters carries maple sugar candy in his pocket for comfort and sustenance. And so the Maple Mission was born.

What started as a class project at OVS, quickly spread to other Slate Valley schools. Now students throughout the district are collecting maple sugar candy to mail to Ukrainian children. Three classes at OVS, one at Benson Village School (BVS), two at Fair Haven Grade School (FHGS) and four at Castleton Elementary School (CES) are reading the Beatryce Prophecy and have joined in the Maple Mission. Students made posters to share with families to collect maple candies.

Upon learning of the effort, the Fair Haven Union High School (FHUHS) Horticulture class donated maple syrup they had made in class. OVS students will bring this syrup to a sugar house where it will be made into maple candy for Maple Mission. Horticulture students were happy to donate their syrup to this cause, and have also invited the elementary students to come see their operation.

As part of the project, the OVS Fourth Grade class contacted the author Kate DiCamillo, who wrote a note for them to attach to the candies:

When I was a kid, I would sometimes receive the special treat of candy made from maple sugar.

I liked to let the candy dissolve slowly in my mouth.

It made me feel warm inside—safe, loved.

That is why we sent this candy to you.

We want you to feel that magic warmth, too.

We want you to feel safe.

We want you to know you are loved.

~Kate DiCamillo

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