

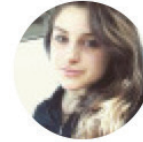
# ENGLEWOOD

ALPINE ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS TENAFLY

DAILY VOICE

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## Route 4 Inspires Englewood Author's Hunger Awareness Book

by Cecilia Levine 01/25/2016 NEIGHBORS



Mel Hioki children at the Hackensack United Methodist Church book reading, organized by CUMAC.

ENGLEWOOD, N.J. — The log that divides the pond in an Englewood author's hunger-awareness book for children actually represents Route 4 in Hackensack.

Mel Hioki, a **CUMAC volunteer**, was helping deliver meals to the homeless with Hackensack United Methodist Church when he realized that just across the highway was an entire mall with several fine dining options.

"The juxtapositions struck me as odd," the author said. "On one side there was plenty of wealth and food and on the other, they didn't get any unless someone brings it to them."

Hioki let the idea of a children's book marinate for years before writing "The Other Side of the Pond" in 2015.

The book is about a large pond divided by one log — Route 4 — with a community of frogs living on either side.

"Both are exactly the same," the author explained. "Except one has plenty of food and one has hardly any."

With the intervention of a duck through a food crisis, the frogs help each other out and find similarities.

Children have been grasping the concept naturally, Hioki said,

"When kids start to hear the story one of them will say 'well, why don't they just share the food?,' the author said.

"These kids are born with this idea of kindness and sharing."

"I'm hoping I can create hunger-awareness among children and plant the seed before... kindness gets pushed to the back burner."

