

7-Year-Old Raises Money for Overnight Warming Location

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - A local 7-year-old has raised money for the Overnight Warming Location by reading every day in January.

Hayden Griffin, a first grader at St. Mary's, was upset when he learned that some people don't have homes to return to at night. He decided to read books to raise money for the [Overnight Warming Location \(OWL\)](#), an organization in Alton and Edwardsville that provides overnight shelter for people when the temperatures drop below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. On Feb. 5, 2024, Hayden toured the OWL in Alton and delivered a check to a representative.

"I believe in God," Hayden said when asked why he decided to help.

The idea started when Hayden saw a few unhoused community members at a North Pole attraction in December. His mother, Morgan Griffin, explained to him what it means to be unhoused. That night, when Santa Claus asked what he wanted for Christmas, Hayden said he wanted Santa to help homeless people around the world.

While Santa is working on it, Hayden decided he would take matters into his own hands. He worked with his mom and his grandmothers to come up with a plan. Every day in January, Hayden read a new book and people donated to his cause based on how many pages and books he read.

"The difference in his reading, it's come a long way from where we started to now," Morgan said. Hayden used to dislike reading, but he has finished several books in January and he really enjoys Dr. Seuss books and the "Junie B. Jones" series by Barbara Park.

By the end of the month, Hayden read every day in January and raised \$1,500 for the OWL. This money will go toward operating costs and supplies to keep the OWL operational throughout the rest of the winter.

"It's just been really interesting to see the creative ways that people raise money," said OWL representative Martha Pfister. "Not only do we have all ages of people supporting the OWL, but just the ways that you're inspired to do it and the creativity you had in the way that you raised money."

The OWL relies on volunteers and donations. For more information about what they do, or to donate, visit their [official Facebook page](#).