


[Home](#) > [School News](#)

Author Sydelle Pearl Makes History Come Alive With Kennedy Longfellow Fifth Graders



- [News](#)
- [School Newsletter](#)

Author Sydelle Pearl made history come alive for Kennedy Longfellow fifth graders on June 4 when she visited the school library. Pearl's book *Dear Mr. Longfellow: Letters to and from the Children's Poet* is about the generations of children who wrote to and loved the poet. When the author had visited the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow National Historic Site for the first time thirteen years ago, she became fascinated with one particular story from the Cambridge poet's life - the gift that the children of Cambridge gave him in 1879. When the chestnut tree that was made famous by his poem "The Village Blacksmith" was cut down in 1876, children all over Cambridge contributed their dimes so that an armchair could be made from this wood. Henry received this special armchair in 1879, for his 72nd birthday and in response, wrote a poem dedicated to the children of Cambridge called "From My Arm-Chair."



Ms. Pearl was delighted to come to the school that is named in part for Longfellow, to meet modern-day Cambridge children and tell them about the legendary Cambridge poet. Ms. Donna English's class had already spent some time learning about Longfellow, and had visited the National Historic Site in May, so the visit was perfectly timed. Ms. Pearl read excerpts from her meticulously researched book, including a letter from a ten year-old boy, and answered dozens of questions.

After autographing the library's copy of her book, she decorated a library chair with the verses found on the original chair, and presented a copy of the poem "The Village Blacksmith" to each student. Said Pearl, "it is so exciting to speak to children who have visited Longfellow's house and have seen the chair. I am used to talking to school groups in other parts of the country who don't have that opportunity." Student Amanuel Kassa said "it is so amazing to learn about Longfellow and how popular and important he was." then he checked the book out to read more.