



Dear Second Graders:

I wasn't a big reader when I was young. We didn't have many books in my house. As a result, the entire scope of my world was limited to my southern California neighborhood and the people I crossed paths with. Back then my dreams were small, and my possibilities seemed limited. When I finally discovered the power of books and literacy, though, my whole world seemed to open up. We may not have had enough money to travel, but I was exposed to foreign lands and distant cultures through novels. I acquired empathy for others by listening to their stories. Reading gave me the opportunity to walk in another's shoes. To see how they saw. But most importantly, reading gave me a secret place to explore my own emotions. This was vital for a boy growing up in a community that seemed to discourage feeling anything at all. For these reasons, it is my mission to try and foster a love of reading in every young person I encounter in my travels.

Thank You!

Matt de la Peña

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