



## **The Siena Project: Here to be Heard**

*Siena teams up with Learning Ally to publish a book*

*Silver Spring, Maryland, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017-* Students from The Siena School in Silver Spring, MD, are participating in Learning Ally’s Build-A-Book initiative. Over thirty students in grades 4-12 are contributing original short stories, poems, illustrations, and works of art for a collaborative anthology entitled *The Siena School Project: Here to be Heard*.

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Gordon Brown and Orr Kelly visited Siena to speak with students participating in the Build-a-Book project. Both Learning Ally volunteers and published authors, Mr. Brown and Mr. Kelly discussed their experiences writing and recording their books and shared “writing secrets” with the students.

On Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the students will spend the day at Learning Ally’s Studio in Washington, D.C., and will populate the nine recording booths. Learning Ally volunteers will instruct the students on using EasyBooks and the students will be able to record their own pieces for digital publication. Students who contributed artwork will describe the visuals and meaning behind their work. The anthology—produced by and for students—will be assembled as a softcover paperback and an ebook. An audiobook version will soon be available on Learning Ally EasyBook shelves for students throughout the country.

This collaborative anthology is being produced as part of the 2017 Learning Ally Building Books for Student Success campaign. The Siena School is a Learning Ally member school.



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### **About The Siena School**

The Siena School in Silver Spring, Maryland serves bright, college-bound students with language-based learning differences, such as dyslexia. Siena's staff and board of advisors include distinguished national, state and local education leaders and professionals. The school was established in 2006 and serves students in grades 4 – 12. Siena's program is designed for students with mild to moderate learning needs who are experiencing a discrepancy between their academic achievement and intellectual abilities in one or more areas such as reading, writing, oral expression or math. Siena delivers an individualized educational program featuring small class sizes, research-based instructional methodologies, a highly trained staff and an educational environment specifically designed to meet the unique needs of our students, with a specific emphasis on the arts. For further information, The Siena School can be contacted at (301) 244-3600 or on the web at [www.thesienaschool.org](http://www.thesienaschool.org).

### **About Learning Ally**

Founded in 1948, Learning Ally supports K-12, college and graduate students, veterans and lifelong learners – all of whom read and learn differently due to dyslexia, blindness or visual impairment, and other disabilities. Through its extensive community events and support programs, Learning Ally enables parents, teachers and specialists to help students thrive and succeed. The organization hosts live and virtual events for families and teachers; provides instructive webinars led by experts as well as peer-to-peer sessions led by students; personal consultations for parents; and professional development workshops for educators.

Learning Ally's collection of 80,000 human-narrated audio textbooks and literature titles can be downloaded by students using their smartphones and tablets, and is the largest of its kind in the world. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, Learning Ally is partially funded by grants from state and local education programs, and the generous contributions of individuals, foundations and corporations. For more information, visit <http://LearningAlly.org>.