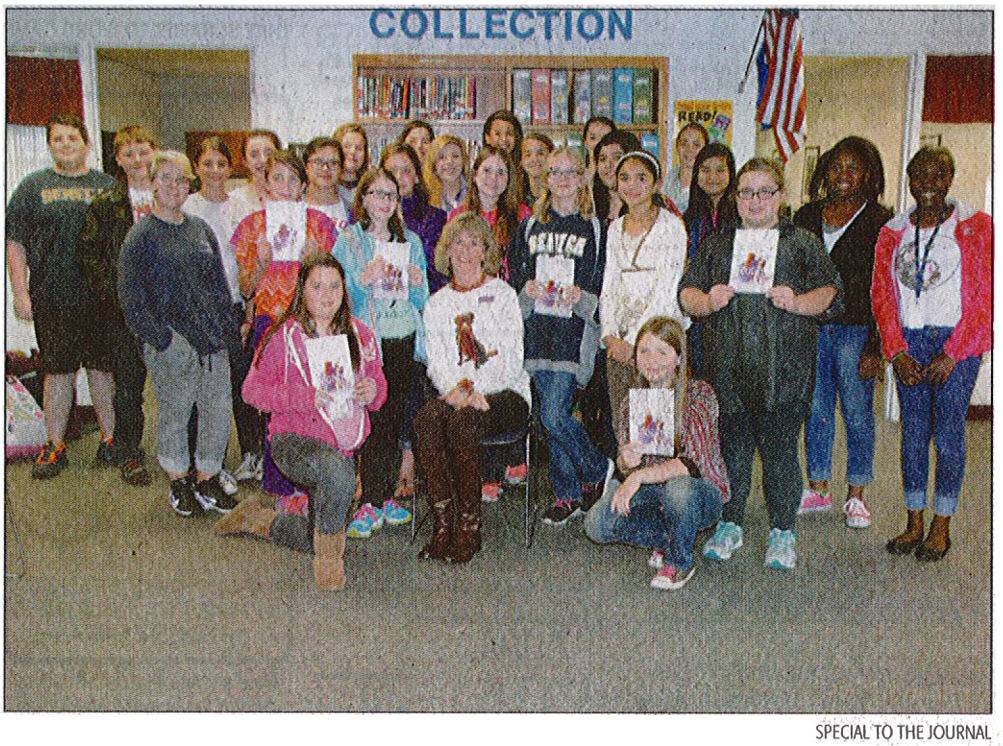

SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Author speaks to students about writing and publishing process

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Recently, young adult author Sheri S. Levy shared the process of writing and publishing her first book, "Seven Days to Goodbye," with approximately 60 students at Seneca Middle School.

The students, who had all already read her book, found it very fascinating to hear how Levy developed the tale of a girl and her involvement in training service dogs from Levy's imagination and personal experiences along with a great deal of research. They were also excited to hear that she has planned a trilogy for this story line and that the second book in the series, Starting Over, is now with the publisher and likely will be available soon.

Through a prepared presentation as well as thoughtful questions from the students, Levy conveyed valuable insights about writing. While many people would think the key to being a good writer is to write and write often, Levy told students that she feels the primary key is to read, read, read. That said, she advised them to set aside time to write each day and be open to criticism and suggestions from a writing group. She also shared how the process of research can take the author down unanticipated paths. In her case, because of her character's involvement in training a service animal, Levy reached out to PAALS, a service dog training organization based in Columbia. She was so moved and impressed with the work that they do she has continued her involvement with the group.

As for the publishing process, Levy detailed how the initial manuscript is changed and molded into its final form through the wisdom and experience of the editor and publisher. She admitted that most writers don't make much money and shouldn't go into writing thinking you will get rich.

However, she shared another gem of wisdom and encouragement when she told the students, "There is no hurt in dreaming big. Don't give up on whatever your dreams may be or they will never have a chance of happening."