



Birmingham READS presents:
The Birmingham READS Book Drive Challenge
April 9 – 21, 2012

How to Host a Book Drive Handbook!

Birmingham READS is a Literacy Partnership:



Sponsored By:



Contact:

Beth Wilder, Birmingham READS Book Drive Challenge Chair
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www.birminghamreads.com
205-326-1925

Birmingham READS Book Drive Challenge Essentials

When Does the Book Drive Challenge Take Place? April 9 - 21, 2012

Please plan to host your book drive during this two-week period. City-wide publicity for the book drive will take place during these weeks. Alabama's NBC-13 is our media partner for this event and will be promoting the book drive on-air and through their website, www.alabamas13.com.

What Is The First Step?

Fill out the **Birmingham READS Book Drive Challenge** registration form at the end of this handbook and email or fax it to Beth Wilder at bwilder@literacy-council.org or fax 205-326-0538.

Then What Do We Do?

Get your school's PTO/PTA behind this event as well as reading coaches and reading teachers. Organize a committee to be in charge and carry out the following tasks:

- Assign a volunteer to each grade level to promote the event among the teachers and the children. Set an overall collection goal for the school and collection goals for each classroom.
- Begin publicizing the event after the winter holidays so parents and children may begin collecting books. Write articles for the school newsletter and put the event on the school website and calendar.
- Have teachers speak to the children about the illiteracy problem in our state and the fact that many children do not have books in the home to help them learn to read.
- Two weeks prior to the event make posters, bulletin boards, flyers to go home in the backpacks that promote the **Book Drive Challenge**. Make a large poster to track the collection and advancement toward the goal and hang it in a very visible place.
- One week prior to the event begin publicizing on the morning announcements and in the classroom.
- On Monday, April 9 set out the drop-off bins around the school.
- During the event, station volunteers in the morning carpool lines and at school entrances to accept books and monetary donations.
- On Thursday, April 19 at 1:00 pm host your own **Birmingham READS** event in the classrooms. Invite parents or other outside guests to come and read to the kids. The goal is to have all K-5 kids in the Birmingham metro area reading at the same time!
- On Friday, April 20, gather the book drive committee together to count the books and box them up for delivery.
- On Saturday, April 21, head on down to Brookwood Village for the **Birmingham READS** Celebration. Deliver the books for your school, enjoy celebrity readers doing story time for the kids, take part in fun family activities, and stick around to see if your school WINS!

What Kinds Of Books Do We Collect?

The collected books will be distributed to elementary school children grades K-5 in the Birmingham City School district. We prefer new books, but gently used books (with the emphasis on GENTLY) are also accepted. We also will accept money. \$1 equals one book in the overall book total.

Chapter books, early reader picture books, and intermediate series books are popular with the children we serve. Some series and authors to keep in mind are:

Magic Tree House	Matt Christopher
Arthur	Beverly Cleary
Goose Bumps	Judy Blume
Babysitters Little Sister	Louis Sacher
Bailey School Kids	Roald Dahl
Cam Jansen	Eric Carl
Nate the Great	J.K Rowling
A to Z Mysteries	Laura Ingalls Wilder
Alex Ryder	Lemony Snicket

All non-fiction children's books are welcome, especially biographies of famous Alabamians or famous African-Americans. Science-related books are also wonderful, as are how-to books and inspirational stories. A more complete listing of desired books can be found on our website at www.birminghamreads.com.

Paperback books are perfectly fine as long as they are in mint condition. Only hard back books can be used in school libraries and classrooms, but agencies such as Better Basics use thousands of paperback books each year to give as motivation rewards to school children. Most of the donated paperback books will actually go home with a child.

Who Do We Call If We Have Questions?

Assistance with your school book drive is only a phone call or email away! Contact Beth Wilder, executive director of The Literacy Council and chair of the **Birmingham READS Book Drive Challenge**, at bwilder@literacy-council.org or by calling 205-326-1925.

Why Is The Birmingham READS Book Drive Challenge So Important?

There are 92,000 functionally illiterate adults in Central Alabama. That means 16% of the general population does not read well enough to fill out a job application or read the directions on a prescription bottle or help their children with homework. 17% of Alabama's families live below the poverty level. The connection between illiteracy and poverty is not hard to make. The easiest way to combat the illiteracy problem in our state is to prevent it from happening in the first place with reading intervention and enrichment in our public schools. The purpose of **Birmingham READS** is to show our most vulnerable school children that reading is the single most important skill they will learn in life.

More than 25% of our school children are falling behind in reading by fourth grade. Reading fundamentals are taught from kindergarten through 3rd grade. If a child does not have the fundamentals down by 4th grade, they tend to fall further and further behind with little hope of catching up. *The Birmingham News* recently reported that 41% of Birmingham City school children will drop out of high school before graduation. That's 41% of the potential work force entering adulthood without a high school diploma, many of them without the most basic skills needed to fill out a job application.

Studies show the more often a child is read to, the better their reading scores. The sad fact is that the majority of children who struggle with reading do not have adequate reading support at home. Many of them have few, if any, books to read and many more of them have parents who are functionally illiterate. In order to break the cycle of illiteracy, we must reach out to the children with reading enrichment and intervention programs to foster a love of reading AND get books into their hands to take home.

In the past three years, ***Birmingham READS*** has donated over 50,000 books to area school children. Some of these books stay in the classrooms and libraries, but the vast majority of them go home with the kids. To see the joy on the face of a 1st grader who has never owned his very own book is to see the difference reading can make in the life of a child.

Literacy Statistics (from the National Center for Education Statistics)

- 28% of Alabama's fourth graders read below grade level on national SAT tests
- 25% of Alabama's kindergarten students scored in the "at-risk" category for vocabulary levels
- 41% of Birmingham City School students drop out of high school before graduation
- 32% of Alabama's high school graduates who enter college need remedial reading help
- 16% of the general population in Alabama is functionally illiterate (reads below a 4th grade level)
- 17% of Alabamians live below the poverty level (40% of African-Americans)
- Estimated 63% of Alabama's prison inmates are functionally illiterate
- Estimated 70% of people in homeless shelters in Birmingham metro area are functionally illiterate

Registration Form for Birmingham READS Book Drive Challenge

Yes! Our school wants to participate in the 2012 Birmingham READS Book Drive Challenge

Name of School _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

School Phone Number _____ Name of Principal _____

Book Drive Contact Person _____

Email Address _____ Phone Number _____

School Enrollment _____ Book Drive Goal _____

Please fill out this registration form and return via fax, mail or email to:
Beth Wilder, Birmingham READS Book Drive Challenge Chair
c/o The Literacy Council
2301 First Avenue North, Suite 102, Birmingham, AL 35203
FAX: 205-326-0538
PHONE: 205-326-1925
bwilder@literacy-council.org

For more information about Birmingham READS, check out our website:
www.birminghamreads.com

