



My Very Own Book Quarterly Newsletter

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Children Helping Children

At My Very Own Book, we are continuously inspired by the outpouring of support we receive from the community. The children, families, and schools featured and pictured here are excellent examples of people who care about helping others and have the drive to make change happen. In addition, the adults involved are dedicated to teaching children by example about the importance of giving back. We greatly appreciate all of their new book donations!



For the second year in a row Kerr Elementary in Allen ISD supported My Very Own Book. At the beginning of November the school donated Scholastic points to buy our non-profit wonderful new books, but they didn't stop there! The school conducted a Scholastic One For Books drive in which students donated their spare change to buy us more new books! Wow! When I went to pick out new books, I was so touched by the stories I heard about children bringing in whole mason jars full of change to donate to help other little kids. We want to especially thank Book Fair

Chairperson Joann Hicks, PTA President Donna Neal, Principal Ardath Streitmatter and Assistant Principal Melanie Covington.



This is also the second year in a row The Spanish Schoolhouse in North Dallas has supported My Very Own Book by donating Scholastic points to MVOB in order to purchase new books for us. Among the books is a set of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* books. The kids will be absolutely thrilled! Thank you to Administrator Monica Plata and to parent Christina Jacques for organizing the donation. We really enjoyed speaking to the kindergarten class about where the books will be going and the importance of helping other kids.

We are honored that all of the schools featured here have supported us since our inception. Carroll Elementary in Frisco ISD supported us again by also conducting a Scholastic One For Books drive in their school this year. When President Helen Van Auken received the books from librarian Jamie Hitchcock, she was

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Message from the President

The first half of the 2010-11 school year has been incredibly successful. In just the first two six weeks periods we have awarded 2,591 new, free books to students. We have 4 more award cycles so thinking about the number of books that will go into homes this year is very exciting.

My feelings about the importance of books in the home was recently validated when I read an article by Kathy Hamilton, who stated, "A recent study...highlights the importance of books in the home. According to the study, there is a direct correlation between how many books are in the home and how many years of education a child will complete. Even as few as 25 books in the home, a child, on average, will complete two more years of education than a child growing up in a home with no books." In a recent New York Times Op-Ed, David Brooks writes about an observation made by a philanthropist who gives books to disadvantaged children. "It's not the physical presence of the books that produces the biggest impact, she suggested. It's the change in the way the students see themselves as they build a home library. They see themselves as readers, as members of a different group.

"It's the change in the way students see themselves as they build a home library..."

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More and More Students Reading!



Every six weeks, after the certificates have been handed out and students have selected their book, the site coordinator at each of our five schools sends us statistics. Statistics might seem boring to some, but we love getting them! Why? Because they verify what

we hope is happening: More students are participating throughout the year and from year to year.

During the 2009-2010 school year, our first program year as a non-profit, we served three schools. The faculty and students truly embraced the program and we were proud to give out a total of 3,149 new books to students for reading for more than 2.4 million minutes.

During this 2010-2011 school year we have had two awards days (the next one takes place in mid-January). We are now serving five schools, but if we just compare the statistics from last year with the statistics

of this year for those same three schools we see excellent growth. Here are some exciting statistics:

- During the first six weeks of this year, these three schools had 1.5 times more students participate than the first six weeks of last year.
- During the second six weeks, the schools had 1.9 times more students participate!

Fortunately, our initial three schools are not the only example of growth. Our two new schools are also doing a great job.

- Between the first and second awards periods this year, the two new schools increased their number of students participating by 93 students!

Last year, with three schools, we gave out an average of 1,000 new books per school. This year, based on the fact that we have already given out 2,591 new books during just two of the four periods, we expect to give out an average of 1,500 new books per school. **Therefore, it is a real possibility 7,500 new books will be put into homes in low-income neighborhoods because more and more students are reading!**

Children Helping Children (cont.)



so pleased to find titles that are so popular with our students, such as *Magic Tree House*. We also want to thank Carroll Elementary PTA member Amy King for coordinating the drive to support our charity.



While he was growing up, Alison's father's family had very limited resources. One of the few books in his home was about the British Navy. He spent hours looking through the book and remembers it fondly. He grew up to earn his PhD and ensured there were children's books in his home. Having grown up with books, Alison also made books in the home a priority. She says her son has more books than she can count and

Jackson loves being read to every night. After a visit from MVOB to an organization Alison belongs to, the fact that there are some children who don't have a book to read at night really hit home. She decided to ask friends to bring a new book for MVOB to Jackson's 2nd birthday party instead of presents. We are touched by Alison's story and grateful for the family's support.



We are so pleased to have the support of Piper, Annie, and their family's holiday giving party for a second year in a row! Just like last year, only with Annie now old enough to join in the festivities, this family hosted a holiday party. Rather than have a gift exchange for the children, they asked families to bring a new book for our non-profit and pajamas for a non-profit which serves foster children. The kids at the party enjoyed having fun in their PJs, decorating cookies, and having MVOB President read a story to them. They also were able to learn once again about the importance of helping other kids. We not only thank this family and those who attended for their generous book donations, but also for raising children with an understanding of giving back!

If you have a child in an elementary school which might want to support us or if you would like to host a giving party, please contact Exec. Dir. Kelley Van Auken at kelley.vanauken@myveryownbook.org.

Thank you Kerr Elementary, The Spanish Schoolhouse, Carroll Elementary, Jackson, Piper and Annie! You are not only helping others, but you are learning the importance of giving. Our future is bright!



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My Very Own Book runs reading incentive programs in elementary schools in low income neighborhoods in North Texas school districts. At the end of each six weeks grading period, participating students are rewarded for minutes read at home with a certificate and a new, free book of their choice. This program encourages children to read outside of school hours, increasing literacy skills and putting new books in the homes of families who often can't afford the luxury of purchasing their own new books.

This 2010-2011 school year is the second program year. More than 2,500 students in five schools are being served: two in Dallas ISD, one in Plano ISD, and two in Richardson ISD.

Board Members:

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Jason Hunt

Meredith Fisherman

Sakkarra Winston

Donna Wood-Martin

www.myveryownbook.org

Message from the President (cont.)

Dr. Perri Klass from Boston Medical Center also confirms this thought by writing, "If you want to raise readers, you must provide them with books as soon as humanly possible. This a parental obligation on par with vaccinations." My Very Own Book participants who earn books by reading each six weeks from pre-kindergarten through just third grade will have a library of 30 new books.

We know that not all parents can provide their children with a home library but the North Texas community can, and is doing just that. We are extremely grateful to the businesses, individuals, civic organizations, school communities and MVOB volunteers who have facilitated the success realized during the first semester of 2010-11.

Quarterly Quote

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." -Anne Frank