



My Very Own Book Quarterly Newsletter

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My Very Own Book's Second Program Year Starts Strong

School has started and we are very happy to be continuing our program in the three schools we served during the 2009-2010 school year - Audelia Creek in RISD, Elisha M. Pease in DISD, and Mendenhall in PISD - while also starting our program in two new schools - Maria Moreno in DISD and Spring Valley in RISD. These schools are all filled with enthusiastic teachers and excited students. We have discussed our program at faculty meetings at all of our schools. These teachers already have so much work to do, yet they are embracing our program! At Audelia Creek we will continue to work with our school site coordinator, Ganges Mathew Karundethu. At our four other schools, we are excited to get to know our new coordinators Edith Bender (Maria Moreno), Connie Smith (Mendenhall), Debra Davis (Pease), and Randi Barton (Spring Valley). You can learn more about our schools by visiting www.myveryownbook.org/Programs.html.

In addition to meeting with the school staff, we have also attended parent nights at three of our five schools (the last two will be in October) and have seen first hand once again how much the families want to enrich their child's educational experience. We also enjoyed the students' big smiles as they pointed to one of the display books by a favorite author or in a favorite series. We have no doubt they will be reading a lot outside of school hours to earn those new books.



To get ready for the first awards assembly/book selection in October, nine volunteers/Board members gathered on September 19th to pull more than 2,700 books to go to the five participating schools for the first book selection day. MVOB provides each school with more than double the quantity they will need for each grade level to provide a true selection in the school's "free bookstore." With more than 9,000 books in MVOB storage to choose from, the volunteers were able to pull a variety of books from popular series, authors, and genres.

If you want to become energized and excited by our mission, volunteer to help us sort and box up books. Our next book sorting is on Sunday, November 14th at 2:00 p.m. at President Helen Van Auken's house in Lucas (just east of Allen). Book sorting day is a chance to see the beautiful books that go to our schools and to reminisce about your favorites. To volunteer, e-mail kelley.vanauken@myveryownbook.org.

Message from the President

As we begin our second year for My Very Own Book in the elementary schools, I have to express how excited I am about this school year, and the reasons for my optimism. Over the summer I met with all of our school administrators and their enthusiasm was infectious. We also had a training for our new site coordinators and met with our returning coordinator at Audelia Creek. What a dedicated group of educators! They are passionate about motivating children to read outside of school hours and about getting books into the homes of all students. These people already have a full plate of tasks but are willing to use their talents to take on this very important mission.

In July we met with our new expanded MVOB Board of Directors. These people are not educators but men and women who recognize how very critical it is for our community to facilitate the creation of a fully literate citizenry. They have hit the ground running, taking on committee positions and spreading the word about the importance of reading and books in all homes.

This will be a great year for kids!

“...men and women who recognize how very critical it is for our community to facilitate the creation of a fully literate citizenry...”

Book Drives Hosted to Benefit My Very Own Book

In July and August, the **BORDERS**® locations on Greenville Lane in Dallas and on Preston Road in Plano conducted a book drive for six weeks, and the response was outstanding. We received a total of **2,654 new books** with a total fair market value of **\$19,213.41!** WOW! The people who shop at these two stores are clearly extremely generous and the store employees obviously went out of their way to make the drive successful. Not only is this quantity of books an amazing boost to our program, but the quality of books and popularity of titles will be a big factor in inspiring students to read in order to earn them. The next time you are in one of those stores we hope you will thank them for their support.



Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration is hosting their second new book drive for MVOB. Their drive is from Septemeber 19 - October 19. They are located at the northwest corner of Spring Valley and Hillcrest Roads. As a special incentive, the church is offering books at cost at its Kay Andrews Bookstore, located on the

church campus. The store is open Tuesday-Friday from 10 AM-2 PM and before and after all weekend services.

How You Can Help

In this economy, it can be difficult for one person to make a large contribution, but easier for many to donate a new book. New book drives are a critical part of our ability to serve so many students. Please consider speaking to your:

- religious institution
- employer
- social organization
- child's school

about conducting a new book drive for us. If they are receptive to hearing more, let us know, and we'll take it from there. We are here to make the drive easy and successful. We can do as little or as much as they want. We can:

- provide flyers, newsletter notices, and collection bins
- speak to your group or volunteer at a drive
- arrange to have a bookseller at your location for people to buy and donate books on-site
- work with you to do a drive during your child's school's Scholastic book fair, earning the school points.

Fun, Food & Fundraising

You know a group of supporters are dedicated to a cause when they get up early on a Saturday to be at a fundraiser at 9:00 a.m.!

On Saturday, September 25th supporters of My Very Own Book did just that for our first fundraiser of the new school year. In addition to raising money for new books for students, another incentive for the supporters to come was the event itself at The International Culinary School at The Art Institute of Dallas.

At the MVOB **Cook for Books** event, supporters were able to play “chef contestant” or “culinary judge” for a day. “Chefs” were divided into two teams and taught by culinary school instructors how to cook an elaborate meal, from salad to dessert, for a large group of people. Their food was then judged by two special guest judges, Chef Mo Assi and Chef Asdren Azemi, as well as “judge” attendees. It was a rare treat to have their food critiqued by star chefs such as Chef Assi, Executive Sous Chef of *Lawry’s The Prime Rib*, and Chef Azemi, owner and Executive Chef of *Ruffino’s Restaurant*.



“Chef” guests Kathleen McClelland & MVOB Board Member Dot Pitts



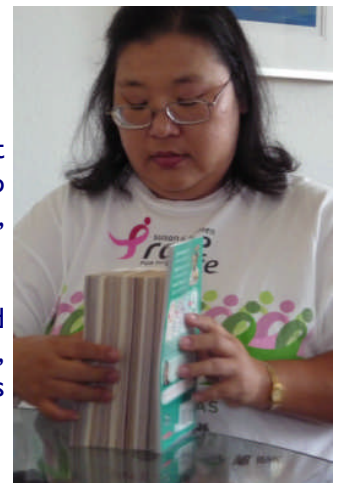
All guests at the event were able to enjoy the food during the **Cook for Books** luncheon. Four guests also won exciting door prizes, such as a Le Creuset risotto pot, and the winning “Red Team” was awarded aprons embroidered with the MVOB logo. Both teams prepared great food, as evidenced by their high scores and the championship being determined by only two points.

The winning “chef-testants” with special judges Chef Mo Assi & Chef Asdren Azemi

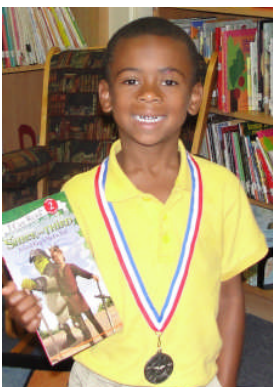
From the Inside

I’m not sure that I put much forethought into what being on the Board of a non-profit would be like. I did not dwell on what rewards I might derive from being in a leadership position. I suppose I thought it would be much like other charitable work I have done. Boy, was I wrong!

I began helping out with the more mundane things like co-conducting a financial audit and reconciling book totals - nothing that would get your blood moving. That all changed, however, when I went to visit Elisha M. Pease Elementary in Dallas for their first Parents Night of the year.



Donna Wood-Martin, MVOB Board Member and this issue’s “From the Inside” writer, sorting books



The students all seemed eager to be back in school and were little whirlwinds of pent up energy. Whether or not they were active participants last year, every child instantly recognized our logo and understood that it meant free books. Some of the newest students didn’t necessarily understand the “read for rewards” concept yet, but they were drawn to the bright book covers like bees to flowers. We had more than one parent tell us that she had already been keeping track of her child’s number of minutes read.

Pease student with his new book and reading medal last year

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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:

Horacio Aldrete

Jason Hunt

Meredith Fisherman

Sakkarra Winston

Donna Wood-Martin

www.myveryownbook.org

From the Inside (cont.)

As someone who grew up with a lot of books (books were my best friend), I confessed to Helen on our way to the school that evening, I couldn't fathom what it would be like to only be able to choose one book. She patiently explained to me that I was looking at it all wrong. The kids do not look at the limitation of only being able to choose one book. Instead, they see the valuable prize they get to select because they *earned* the right to a new book. - Wow, I was not expecting to have my paradigm of how I see books turned on its head.

I am anxiously awaiting being able to attend an awards/selection ceremony at one of the schools. I will watch with great anticipation as a child has to choose which great adventure he or she will embark upon next. One thing I know I will be witnessing: I will be watching a child take his or her first steps onto the lifelong road of reading.

Quarterly Quote

"Children should learn that reading is pleasure, not just something that teachers make you do in school." -Beverly Cleary