



# Assistance League® Birthday Book Program.

A book is a magical thing. Once you open it and start to read, you can find yourself transported to any place in the world, any time in history, or any realm of fantasy an author can invent or your imagination can envision. The best part is that you can reach the most exciting destinations without ever leaving home.

## What?

- ✚ Birthday Book Program was established in 2007.
- ✚ Children in low-income homes enrolled in Title I schools throughout greater Phoenix did not have access to reading materials in their home.
- ✚ Through this unique program Assistance League of Phoenix annually provides 7,500 students in nine schools with a new, age-appropriate book to children on their birthday, stressing that **a book is a gift you can open over and over.**

## Why?

- ✚ Studies prove that the simple act of reading on a regular basis directly correlates to higher reading proficiency levels.
- ✚ Enables future success, especially when started at the earliest of ages.
- ✚ **Children need books** outside the classroom to explore their imaginations and develop necessary skills for their future success.

## Book Gifts

- ✚ School principals acknowledge every child in the school during their birthday month.
- ✚ They select a book of their interest, from the wide variety of new book titles in the brightly decorated Birthday Book Corners as our present to them.
- ✚ Students receive this gift regardless of their reading ability, in hopes to spark the love of reading.

- ✚ Our program addresses one of the most important factors affecting literacy- **access to recreational reading in the home!** Administrators tell us that they have definitely seen an increase in students' reading ability since this program began because now they are reading more at home.
- ✚ For many we serve, this is the first book they have ever owned and we are told that for some it may be their only birthday gift they receive, as we serve students in low income areas of Phoenix.
- ✚ Since the Birthday Book Corners began, over 57,000 books are now in the hands of these children and home libraries are becoming a reality.
- ✚ This is the only program of its kind that we know of and the smiles on their faces speak volumes to us.

### **How can we grow the program?**

- ✚ There is a waiting list of schools that have asked to be included in this well-loved Birthday Book program.
- ✚ To serve more students and become more effective, we are exploring a new bookmobile delivery system allowing us a more efficient way to provide this Program and to be able to serve more students.
- ✚ That will require funding and resources from donor support in a variety of way.
- ✚ New age appropriate books are needed – we can provide a recommended wish list of titles, monetary gifts allowing us to take advantage of sales from book wholesale providers, or pay shipping for books we have secured by grants.
- ✚ We would be happy to work with your business or organization to sponsor a book drive of new books for children kindergarten through 8th grade. Perhaps you would like to underwrite the cost of operation at an additional school.

### **One of Our School Principal writes:**

*“Our school serves 600 amazing students who live in one of the most economically disadvantaged communities in Phoenix. For many of our families, purchasing books for their children to read is an unaffordable luxury. Through your generosity, each of our students gets to choose a book of their very own. It is an absolute joy to watch the students excitedly share the stories contained in their books through reading with their classmates and siblings. We are very fortunate to have you as a literacy partner. Thank you for investing in our school and the families we serve. Our students are happily reading because of you!” Elementary School Principal*

### **A Parent sent this message to us:**

*“Ladies of Assistance League, thank you for giving my child a book for her birthday. She loves it and reads it over and over. Her younger brother sits by her as she reads and she is getting better and better. I am a single mother working 2 jobs to keep my family going. This was a generous gift that I could not afford to give her. Thank you again.” Parent*

We know that literacy is learned and illiteracy is passed along. By teaming up with literacy partners to address this issue head on, our Birthday Book Program will continue to connect children with books. ***Only when early literacy becomes everyone’s responsibility will we have the kind of impact and change we need to see Arizona children thrive.***

**Additional comments include:**

*“This program means the world both to my students and myself. I totally enjoy inviting the students to the birthday book room. I often get comments from students. During the last several years, I have heard "Do I get this for keeps?" or “I get to take this home for ever”? It is true that many of our students don't have books in their homes and when they receive a book, they are truly happy and surprised. For some this might be their only gift as we have students from homeless shelters attending our schools. There has been a few times this year when parents have asked me about the free book their child brought home. I explain the program to them and the reaction is always positive and grateful. Often, the younger students will give me a hug and a big thank you! I tell them who gave them the book and show them the Assistance League label on the inside cover. My sincere thanks for the books and all that you do for my school.” School Librarian*

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*“The Birthday Book Room has become an important fixture on our campus. Like many other schools in our area, many of our students do not have the luxury of having their own books at home. The Birthday Book Room is helping to change that. It is truly a pleasure to watch the children come in each month to select their book. Part of the fun is watching how intent they are on choosing ‘just the right one’. It can often take a while but I imagine that is part of the fun for them! What a wonderful thing!” School Principal*

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*“It has impacted their attitude in a positive way. They love to read the books they choose because it’s something they are interested in.” School Reading Specialist*

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*“This, for many children, is the first time they were able to select a “book” as a gift for themselves. Powerful to watch...” Coordinator*

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*“Rewarding a student with literature places a high value on quality books. The students are developing a love of reading because they are interested in the subject they have chosen. It creates a love for recreational reading and will have a lasting impact on their lives. Choice is powerful! Thank you for caring enough to provide them with these tools as they begin their journey in learning.” Reading Specialist*

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