

Experiencing the joy of reading one story at a time
The Gift of Reading® gives 30,512 books to underprivileged Quebec children

Montreal, April 27, 2011—For its 12th edition, *The Gift of Reading®* is giving 30,512 brand new books to as many underprivileged children aged 0–12. The Literacy Foundation and project spokesperson, actress Marie Turgeon, are proud to announce that this initiative, which aims to prevent reading difficulties that lead to children dropping out of school and then to illiteracy, has been an unqualified success! Since 1999, more than 255,000 new children's books have been given out through *The Gift of Reading®*.

Broad, targeted distribution

Having their very own new books is not a privilege everyone has. "The children realize that many of them have few if any books at home," explained France Saint-Jacques, a teacher at École Marie-Rivier, at a book distribution event. "One student in particular had tears in his eyes when he received the comic book he had wanted for two years." Note that in Quebec, 228,740 children aged 0–17 live in low-income families (Statistics Canada).

The books collected in November and December in 160 bookstores and more than 100 libraries, among other locations, were sorted and inspected for distribution in the donors' regions. Hundreds of book distribution events will be held in May 2011 in 450 establishments across Quebec, among them 158 schools and 641 elementary classes (selected using the deprivation indicators established by the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports [MELS]), 85 daycare centres, 172 *Famille* grassroots organizations and 35 non-profit organizations.

Acting at every stage in life

The Gift of Reading® hopes in this way to help break the cycle of transmission of low reading proficiency, especially in neighbourhoods marked by poverty and low education. Books are also a tool for raising parents' awareness as to their role as models and educators. "In giving a child a brand new book," says spokesperson Marie Turgeon, "we are offering him not only a physical object, but also the opportunity to spend special time with his parent, and to discover all the joy reading can bring."

In guiding parents with low reading skills toward local reading awareness, homework help and family literacy resources, the *Info-Alpha line* has an impact on the incidence of illiteracy within families. This assistance and referral service, set up by the Literacy Foundation in 1990, can be reached at 1-800-361-9142.

30,512 thanks to Quebec Donors!

The Gift of Reading® mobilizes and reaches hundreds of stakeholders from a variety of fields: teachers, daycare workers, community organization workers, librarians, booksellers, publishers and book distributors, media, organizations and so on. Several thousand loyal donors and 423 partners mobilized around a shared goal: to allow thousands of underprivileged children in Quebec to grow up with a brand new book in their hands. Together, they make the project the success it is today.

Literacy Foundation

Founded in 1989, the Literacy Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to ensure that everyone—adults and children—has access to reading and writing. To help the Foundation, make a donation at fondationalphabetisation.org/en.

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Source:
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