



Press release
For immediate release

The Gift of Reading®
10 years later...

Thousands of children still don't have stories read to them

Montreal, October 23 2008—The Literacy Foundation is proud to launch the 10th edition of *The Gift of Reading®*. Since its inception, the project has grown extraordinarily, allowing the Foundation to give more than 165,000 brand new books to the same number of underprivileged children (aged 0–12) with a view to keeping children in school and preventing illiteracy. Nevertheless, 10 years down the line, the Foundation still receives thousands of requests each year for new books for children from the poorest neighbourhoods in every Quebec region.

It is this fact that prompts the Foundation to raise public awareness further as to the fact that books and reading stories do not hold a special place in most families targeted by the project. It is recognized that early contact with the written word is the prime factor in academic success and perseverance in reading. So the family's involvement in this stage is crucial in the child's lifelong relationship with books. Remember, in Quebec, 228,740 children aged 17 and under live in low-income families.

A little imagination into the everyday

To underscore the 10th anniversary of *The Gift of Reading®*, the bleublancrouge agency designed a new advertising and promotional campaign without charge, taking its inspiration from children's stories and the imaginary worlds they create. A TV, radio and print campaign will be run in the media, in November and December, inviting the general public to put a little imagination into the everyday lives of poor children by buying them their first brand new book.

The 10th edition of *The Gift of Reading®* will also be marked by special projects designed both to raise the project's profile and to increase public awareness as to the importance of reading together as a family.

Calendar 2009 – 10th anniversary of *The Gift of Reading®* (in French only)

Under the watchful eye of photographer Martine Doucet (*Portrait de famille*), 12 performers' families were captured candid camera-style while enjoying their favourite reading activities. The outcome is a calendar featuring uplifting photographs along with reading tips and tricks for the entire family! This calendar is being sold for \$15 in participating bookstores, at L'Aubainerie, in OSI optometry clinics, L'Essence du Papier stores, the *Grande Bibliothèque* store and the *Musée de la civilisation* store, and on the Foundation's Web site.

Story reading at Montreal's *Salon du livre*

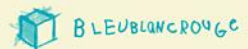
From November 19 to 24, 2008, visitors to Montreal's book fair are invited to have a story read to them by one of the many well-known performers attending the *Gift of Reading®* booth, in a fun environment reminiscent of time spent reading at home. The Foundation also wants to remind the general public of the importance of reading together as a family and to invite them to make *The Gift of Reading®* so as to share this enjoyable activity with more needy families.

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SILVER MEDIA PARTNERS





Where to participate

Marie Turgeon, actress and project spokesperson, reiterates her invitation to take part in The Gift of Reading® in November and December at one of the 160 participating bookstores in Quebec. This year, it is also possible to buy a book online at placedulivre.com. Interested individuals, organizations and companies can organize a book collection or fundraiser throughout the year, too. Eight book fairs are hosting the project, as well. Books collected in a given region will be distributed to children in that region in May 2009.

Buy a book and help the Foundation at the same time!

When you buy one of the following books, \$1 will be given to *The Gift of Reading*®.

- Funny Stories, *Dominique and Friends*
- *Caillou – In My House*, Chouette

"For this extra special edition," says Marie Turgeon, "we would like to celebrate by collecting more than 30,000 brand new children's books. I feel like dreaming of the future ... and helping our future to dream. When you give, you receive so much! I'm giving a book... How about you?"

The Gift of Reading^{MD}

The Gift of Reading® is a project through which brand new books are given to children from underprivileged backgrounds. It also aims to reach parents with weak reading skills, who are likely to encounter reading difficulties and can be helped by the Foundation through the *Info-Alpha* phone line: 1-800-361-9142.

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