

***The Gift of Reading®: a simple, tangible action  
to help keep children in school***

**Montreal, November 2, 2009** – As it marks its 20th anniversary, the Literacy Foundation points out that everyone can take a step to prevent young people from dropping out of school and, by the same token, fight illiteracy. Do what spokesperson and actress Marie Turgeon does: take part in the 11th edition of *The Gift of Reading®* by buying a brand new book for a poor child in your region this November and December.

"While many people are shocked at the staggering number of young people who leave high school without graduating, the Foundation gave 29,614 brand new books to the same number of underprivileged Quebec children last year, thus doing its part to keep children in school. This year," explains spokesperson Marie Turgeon, "it is hoping to pass the 30,000-book mark, and your help is needed if it is to do so!"

Giving a child a brand new book—that is the goal of the *Gift of Reading®* project. It is a way of offering a child a gateway to a world of imagination and wonder, as well as providing him with a tool for the best possible start in life: the joy of reading. The earlier a child is in contact with books, the more positive his relationship with reading will be, and the better his chances will be of staying in school.

**20 years of helping adults and children**

The Foundation also wishes to point out the importance of bearing in mind the reading and writing difficulties that many parents of children targeted by the project may be experiencing. It is proven that parents play a major role in the relationship a child will have with reading. So *The Gift of Reading®* helps the Foundation reach those adults and help them through the *Info-Alpha* line: 1-800-361-9142. In helping the parents, we directly help the children.

**How you can help**

To participate, buy a brand new children's book at one of the 160 participating bookstores in Quebec and ask at the cash for the *Gift of Reading®* donation kit. You can also make your donation at more than 100 libraries.

Books may be purchased online year-round through the [placedulivre.com](http://placedulivre.com) Web site. Also, interested individuals and firms can organize a book collection or fundraiser. Finally, nine book fairs will be hosting the project in their regions this year. For a complete listing of collection sites, visit the *Children* section of [fondationalphabetisation.org/en](http://fondationalphabetisation.org/en).

**Where the books are distributed**

The books collected will be handed out to the children in May 2010, through hundreds of organizations targeted by the Foundation, including schools, child care centres, *Famille* grassroots organizations and other bodies. Each book collected in a given region will be given to a child from that region.

**Participate at Montreal's *Salon du livre* and have a story read to you!**

Once again this year, from November 18–23, 2009, book lovers are invited to Montreal's *Salon du livre* book fair, where they will be able to donate a book for *The Gift of Reading*<sup>®</sup>, as well as having a story read to them by one of the many well-known personalities at the Foundation's booth. Following its success last year, the Foundation is bringing this activity back in order to raise public awareness of the importance of reading together as a family and of its role in early childhood literacy.

**Partners**

The Foundation wishes to thank its 42 partners for their involvement, including Hydro-Québec, the Quebec Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports, Nationex, Bleublancrouge, Montreal's *Salon du livre* book fair, CanWest Raise-a-Reader, Bombardier Aerospace Employees Charity Fund, Zoom Média, Hebdo Québec, Alstom, *Métro* daily newspaper, Corus, Vox, Alstom Télécity and Pop Média.

**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](http://fondationalphabetisation.org/en).

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Source:  
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