

## ***The Gift of Reading – Read and Read Again***

### **15 years spent distributing brand new children’s books to families without any**

**Montreal, November 3, 2013** – The Literacy Foundation and actress/spokesperson Marie Turgeon invite you to buy a brand new children’s book for a child from an underprivileged neighbourhood, as part of the 15th edition of *The Gift of Reading* program. Support the program by visiting one of the 145 participating bookstores and 100 participating libraries in Quebec during November and December. In endorsing our cause, you help convey the magic of reading to children in your region living in families where the connection with books is all too often non-existent.

“A baby who chews on a book at 6 months increases its chances of devouring its content at age 14!” states Foundation CEO, Diane Mockle. “Providing access to books and reading from a very early age is an essential factor in developing the love of reading.”

For many years now, the Literacy Foundation has been mobilizing to bring reading into underprivileged Quebec homes. “The earlier a child is in contact with books, the better his chances are of staying in school,” says program spokesperson, Marie Turgeon. “To enjoy reading is to enjoy learning—it’s fundamental! Reading has to be made accessible to all children. Please help us reach our goal of 40,000 books!”

#### **Moving account from a teacher**

“One of my students has a very hard time reading,” says J. L., a teacher at École Louis-Joseph-Martel. “Although she’s nearly finished Grade 2, she’s reading at a Grade 1 level. She received a fun mini-novel through *The Gift of Reading*. First I thought she wouldn’t be able to read it. She came to see me the next day, her eyes sparkling, to share with me her joy at having read the first two pages all by herself. Then she’d come to see me every day to share the story or ask me for help with a word. She got through the whole book, something I hadn’t believed her capable of. Having her very own book gave her the motivation to keep at her reading. Thank you for this moving moment!”

#### **15th anniversary of *The Gift of Reading***

*The Gift of Reading* came into being during the notorious ice storm of 1998. Seeking a way of giving the public a yearly opportunity to do something to reach our target clientele, Sophie Labrecque, then CEO of the Foundation, had the original idea for the program, along with some teacher friends. The Foundation thus became one of the pioneers in illiteracy prevention and encouraging young people to stay in school by ensuring the distribution of brand new children’s books to kids living in underprivileged neighbourhoods across Quebec. To date, more than 323,000 children and their families have benefited from the program.

## **Taking action at every age**

Alongside the children reached by *The Gift of Reading* are very often parents with low reading skills, confined to precarious, low-paying job sectors, or simply unemployed. But these adults' experience with school directly affects their children's path. In giving a new book to a child through *The Gift of Reading*, you are enabling the Foundation to get in touch with parents with low reading proficiency who would one day like to undertake literacy training so as to contribute to their children's education and quality of life. The *Info-Alpha* line is there to support them: 1-800-361-9142.

## **Collection sites**

The Foundation thanks Archambault, the *Association des bibliothèques publiques du Québec*, the *Association des libraires du Québec (ALQ)*, Coopsco, *Librairies indépendantes du Québec (LIQ)* and Renaud-Bray, which take part in the effort as official collection sites for the program.

## **Where the books are distributed**

The books collected will be distributed to children in May 2014, through hundreds of organizations targeted by the Foundation, on the basis of the deprivation indicators established by the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports (MELS). These establishments include schools, daycare centres and *Famille* grassroots organizations. Each book collected in a region is given to a child from that region.

## **Official cause of Montreal's Salon du livre book fair**

Once again this year, it will be possible to take advantage of a visit to Montreal's *Salon du livre*, November 20-25, 2013, to buy a children's book and place it in one of the collection boxes to be found at many publishers' booths and the Foundation's (#101 and #433).

## **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).

-30-

Source:  
Literacy Foundation  
[fondationalphabetisation.org/en](http://fondationalphabetisation.org/en)

Information:  
Andrée Turmel  
Communications Advisor  
514-289-1178, ext. 226  
[aturmel@fondationalphabetisation.org](mailto:aturmel@fondationalphabetisation.org)