



Dear Supporter of Starr Readers,

6,149!!!

I was going to say "High Five and Congratulations!" but that would be incorrect. So, how about "High Six Thousand One Hundred and Forty Nine!" Once again, that number is not a typo; YOU made this happen.

Starr Readers began as a very small Christmas project to take a few books down to the border town of Rio Grande City, Texas which is located in Starr County and is considered one of the poorest counties in the nation. The first year about 500 books were delivered; I took them down in my car and didn't even need to use the trunk. This year's goal is 7,500 and I just got off the phone with U-Haul about what size truck might be needed. Now THAT is progress!

Of course, our work is never done. As you may know, the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) program has been cut from the federal budget. In a nutshell, Starr Readers will be the only foundation delivering books this Christmas and, needless to say, the pressure is immense but I have complete faith we can reach our goal because we ALWAYS have.

This past year has been quite prosperous for Starr Readers. We were chosen to receive 1,000 copies of "Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!" by Candace Fleming as part of a General Mills sponsored project for Cheerios. In addition, we were one of the organizations chosen by "World Book Night" as a recipient of copies of "The Kite Runner" to be distributed to those who might not have easy access to books. The Dallas Morning News continues to be a great friend to Starr Readers as well as KRLD radio which chose Starr Readers as one of their "Heroes of the Week." Also, did you notice the new "Starr Readers" logo? It was designed by my cousin, Josh Rodriguez, and it definitely captures the spirit of the organization. Whew! What a year!

Still, our priority remains to get books into the hands of as many impoverished children this Christmas as possible. We remain partnered with First Book and Scholastic Book both of whom give us deep, deep discounts. Some of the books we hope to deliver this Christmas include "The Outsiders" by S.E. Hinton, the "Baby Mouse" series and the collection of Jeanette Winter, an author known for her beautiful books about real people such as "Wangari's Trees of Peace", "The Watcher: Jane Goodall's Life with the Chimps" and "The Librarian of Basra", the true story of a woman in Iraq who risked her life to save the books in her library when threatened by war.

I wish you could be there when the books are delivered to witness the sheer joy on the faces of the children and the graciousness of the librarians when the delivery arrives. As I have said before: Books are *magic*. Books offer a different world when the one we're in may not always be easy. A good majority of these children live in colonias where there is no running water, proper sewage or enough to eat. As if that isn't traumatizing enough, many of the kids have fled with their families from the drug wars which continue to rage on the border - the book they receive might be their only Christmas gift they receive this year. Starr Readers lets them know they *matter*.

Please send your check in the self-addressed envelope or you can donate online at www.starreaders.com. A thousand "thank you(s)" and Merry Christmas to you and your loved ones!

Sincerely,

Karen Furlong
Founder, Starr Readers

P.S. As is tradition, I will drive the books down to the border in December so please make your donation ASAP so the books can be ordered, shipped, received and sorted. Also, please enjoy the article by Mercedes Olivera from last year and watch for her article this year to be published in November.

www.starreaders.com