

November 30, 2015

Dear Parents (this is especially for you),

Imagine not being able to cuddle up with your favorite book on a cold winters day because you have trouble reading. Our second grade buddies at Oakland Elementary are struggling with their reading and writing skills. At school, the children get read to by their teachers but at home most kids don't have access to literature. We remember learning to read with our parents and how easily it came to us.

Now these kids are a different matter because many live in poverty. Poverty can cause parents to get multiple jobs. At some points they are at work all day and most nights. That means that the kids do not get much of a chance for getting read to or reading to an adult. You may be wondering, "What if they have older siblings?" They might have older siblings, but if the older siblings are old enough to work, they will also be trying to support the family.

According to Bernie's Book Bank, when the state of Arizona predicts how many beds in jail they will need, they look at the reading levels of third and fourth grade. In stating this, we also understand that this is not true to all kids under the grade level for literacy. With the influence of these children's parents, poverty may be a part of our buddies adult lives and become a part of their children's generation.

Now, you may be thinking, "Why are we wanting to help these kids if they could be bound for prison?" Well, we may just be sixth graders but we understand the importance of the next generation and their impact on the world. Just because most of our buddies are struggling to read now, doesn't mean they are not worth fighting for.

In the end, we want to impact them for the rest of their lives. So we have a few ideas that we believe are worth considering. A book drive would improve our buddies access to literacy and let the rest of society know about what is happening. Now as we are only children, we will need some time to plan, but that is only the tip of the iceberg. Once we have the needed amount of books, we want to take it to the

next level. Book bags would make the children more enticed in their reading. The bags will be gallon sized ziploc bags with a name sticker. Within this glorious bag, we wish to have at least two books for their own personal reading levels, wicked witch pointer finger, and a laminated word practice sheet with long and short vowel sounds. Also, we would like to include a packet of stickers, so when they complete a book and get all the sounds correct, they would receive a congratulatory sticker.

Now we have to take it up yet another notch; personalized book shelves! Book shelves will only be two shelves high. Building or buying both cost money so how to raise that amount of money is still to be determined. We don't know our buddies that well, the only thing we do know is their names. We would love to meet them and get to know them. So, while personalizing the shelves, we want to decorate them with our buddies. Also, when we are there we would love to read to them and they might want to try to read to us. In saying this, we need a fundraiser to pay a bus fee to go to Oakland Elementary.

So all in all, we need money and books to impact our buddies the most. Our second grade buddies need someone to help them as they walk the path of literacy. To give you an idea of about where our buddies are, here are some numbers that will show you how much they need our help. About 88 percent of our buddies are below grade level, which means they are about 1 year behind. Also, about 38 percent are significantly below grade level, which means they are about 2 or more years behind. The saddest part of this whole thing is that only 1 kid out of a class of 24 is reading at grade level. We are bridging the economic, racial and educational line by being a part of this project, which shows that we still care about those less well off than us.

Sincerely,

Alex

AURORA

Emma

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