

Established 2010 in memory of Judith F. Krug

“FREEDOM THROUGH LITERACY”

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*“The only way to do all the things you’d like to do is to read.”*  
– Tom Clancy

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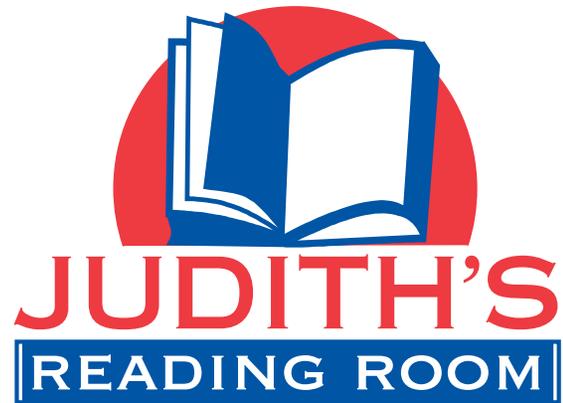
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Students in Indonesia learn English from our book donations.



Low-income families who receive free dental care on board the St. Luke’s Dental Van also get books from Judith’s Reading Room.



### VISION

"Freedom Through Literacy"

### MISSION

"To enrich lives by providing books to those that do not have access to them."

Judith's Reading Room provides custom libraries to not-for-profit organizations. We want our individually prepared libraries to be a universal symbol representing the ideal that every person around the world deserves access to literature, which has the power to transport and transform.



*“Libraries serve the information needs of all the people in the community- not just the loudest, not just the most powerful, not even the majority. Libraries serve everyone.”*      -Judith F. Krug

## Judith F. Krug’s Legacy

Judith’s Reading Room was established in 2010 in memory of Judith F. Krug, first cousin to its founders. Judith was a librarian for over 40 years and served as the Director of the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom. A First Amendment purist, Judith achieved immortality in 1982 when she founded Banned Books Week, an annual celebration of literature that has been targeted for censorship in various communities. Every one of Judith’s Reading Room’s donations is a concrete reminder of Judith’s devotion to championing literature.

In 2013, Judith’s Reading Room won a grant from the Freedom to Read Foundation as a result of our compelling idea to bring attention to the ongoing issue of censorship in America. In collaboration with Muhlenberg College’s Six Meters improvisational dance group (*pictured right*), the performance was based on *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, with readings from many banned or challenged books in the U.S.



# Executive Summary

Judith's Reading Room, a 501(c)(3) organization based in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, founded in 2010, champions the First Amendment's guaranteed right to free speech by actively working to overcome restrictions on any person's freedom to read. We energetically channel this message each day with our aspiration of "Freedom through Literacy." Our mission is to enrich lives by donating outstanding customized libraries and boxes of books to underserved communities.

Judith's Reading Room has adopted as its core value the African philosophy of *ubuntu*. This concept reveals a world in which compassion guides all actions, a thread that connects human beings to one another through willing participation and openness. We incorporate ubuntu into everything we do, from our eagerness to reach out and work with organizations to caring about and giving back to the community that supports us with equal passion. When it comes down to it, when we empower others, we empower ourselves.

We have always believed in the transformative power of literature. It's a philosophy that informs our three major literacy pillars: "Birth-2-Five" Program, Bi-Coastal Literacy Project, and customized English language children's books to international schools.

We ardently believe that a child's access to books is crucial to their development and success. Especially when that child comes from a low-income family, where a book is seen as a luxury item. Without books in the home, children struggle to develop the necessary reading skills that propel them forward in school and in life. As a result, they cannot seem to break from the vicious cycle of poverty that stunts their potential. According to the Global Partnership for Education, if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills, **171 million people could be lifted out of poverty.**

To give children aged birth to five from families of inter-generational poverty a chance for a better

future, we began our **“Birth-2-Five” Program** in 2013. Working with Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs in both Allentown and Bethlehem, PA, we donated **7,000 books** this year to help close the educational gap for over **10,000 children and their families**.

We also continued our work with at-risk teens through the **Bi-Coastal Literacy Project**. We donated libraries and monthly book club selections to help these youth living in juvenile detention facilities or alternative residential homes. Judith’s Reading Room is proving that if you give an at-risk teen the opportunity to strengthen his reading skills, he can pull himself out of delinquency and poverty... all thanks to a book club.

The effort to lift children out of poverty also exists in our **International School Program**. We support American teachers and Peace Corps volunteers who tell us that their students want to learn English so that they can participate in the global economy, where English is integral to success. Today, our libraries are established in ten countries outside the United States, where those books make the difference in the lives of over **17,000 children**.

Since 2010, we have maintained a firm commitment to getting books into the hands of **Troops** serving far from home and **Veterans** in VA hospitals. With **36,768 books** donated so far to nine VA Hospitals and active-duty military bases, our books bring a moment of relief and distraction.

We pride ourselves on being an innovative and nimble organization that endeavors to serve the needs of communities in desperate want of life-changing literature. We also thrive on book donations and the support of dedicated volunteers, who tirelessly bring our mission of “Freedom Through Literacy” to life.

2013 Board of Directors:

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cathy Leiber, President and Co-Founder               | Marissa Ackerman, Director   | David Leiber, Director      |
| Scott Leiber, Treasurer and Co-Founder               | Chiji Akoma, Ph.D., Director | Bernadette Lewis, Director  |
| Linda Wellstein, Esq., Vice President- International | Erin D’Amelio, Director      | Ana Ramirez Luhrs, Director |
| Daniel Leiber, Secretary                             | Leora Hornick, Director      | Ranjeet Pawar, Director     |
|  |                              | Rajendra Pawar, Director    |

Since 2010, Judith's Reading Room has donated:

70 libraries with 68,139 books worth \$688,654



In 2013 alone, we dedicated **25 new libraries** both at home and around the world to promote literacy, empower children, and lift communities out of poverty. Judith's Reading Room libraries are found in **11 countries**—including China, Cambodia, and Costa Rica— thanks to the collaborative efforts of excellent partners. Our idea is simple, but our reach is wide.

# How Do We Get Our Books?

Judith's Reading Room has been the beneficiary of book drives organized by motivated young people looking to do good. We seek new books from book publishers, booksellers, and authors.

Our phone never stops ringing... Book lovers find us because they want to donate their home collections to an organization that can tell them exactly where their books are going to go.





Judith's Reading Room's  
Literacy Pillars

# “Birth-2-Five” Program

We believe that when children are not read to before they start school, it is probable that they will not catch up. Unfortunately, most if not all of these children come from families of inter-generational poverty, where a book is low on the list of priorities. Research shows that by age three, a child in poverty hears 30 million fewer words than a child from a middle-income home.<sup>1</sup> Not only do they have smaller vocabularies, these children lack the confidence and competence to compete with their classmates who have spent their pre-school years nose-deep in books.

A book, however, can change everything. In order to increase the success of our collective future, we have partnered with the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program at two Lehigh Valley, PA locations: Casa Guadalupe in Allentown and Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley in Bethlehem. The idea is simple: donate custom libraries and give books to children aged birth to five at every quarterly visit. These books foster a life-long love of reading that will close educational gaps and open future doors of opportunity for these families.



Cathy Leiber with the first mother and child to receive a “Birth-2-Five” book at HCLV.

<sup>1</sup>Hart, Betty, and Todd R. Risley. “The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3.” 1995.

In 2013, we donated a total of **7,000 children's books** to these organizations, including **130 brand new** baby board books **each month**. In exchange for the free books, parents are asked to sign a "My Promise to Read" pledge, agreeing to read to their children 20 minutes a day. Each year, **1,560 newborn children** will start their first-ever home library.



Nearly 5,000 pledges have already been signed since the start of the program.



A mother reads to her child at Casa Guadalupe.

*“When our parents get handed a free book from Judith's Reading Room they understand that this small gift has the potential to take their child out of the vicious cycle of poverty. They are able to escape to another world and forget about their problems for a short period of time. Without Judith's Reading Room a lot of our families and children would not have access to books or have books be read to them.”*

*–Dawn Bush, WIC Clinic Coordinator, Casa Guadalupe*

During the summer of 2013, we conducted qualitative research to observe the reading skill and interest levels of children in the “Birth-2-Five” Program. In 51 hours, we read aloud to and observed 92 children, noting their behaviors throughout each interaction.

What we found was that though children showed an interest in books, a majority of children *did not possess all of the foundational skills to set them up for academic success*. Such results emphasize the importance of programs like the “Birth-2-Five” program to prepare children to start kindergarten ready to learn.

**Help Your Child Succeed.**

**All you have to do is READ!**

**Good Times**  
Choose a good time for reading. Bedtime is ideal for infants.

**Point It Out**  
Use the pictures to think of new things to say and let your infant play with the book.

**Brain Power**  
Reading aloud to your infant early on increases brain capacity for language and literacy skills.

**Listen Carefully**  
Expose your infant to new vocabulary and language patterns to improve listening skills.

**Read Every Day**  
Twenty minutes of reading out loud every day will help your infant start school ready to learn.

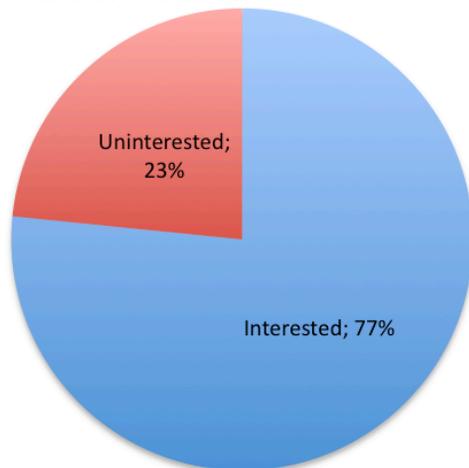
**It's Never Too Early**  
Early exposure to books and language lay the foundation for future success in learning to read—so start now!

Photos by IngleResearch, San Mateo County Library, and Spotify

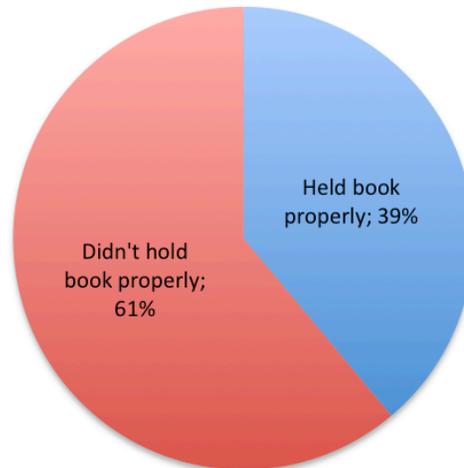
**JUDITH'S**  
READING ROOM

JudithsReadingRoom.org

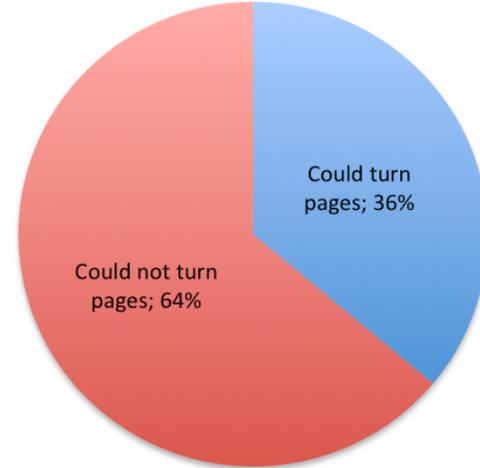
\*Partial results of research



Interested vs. Uninterested in books



Held book properly vs. Did not hold book properly



Could turn pages vs. Could not turn pages

# Bi-Coastal Literacy Project



In 2013, we continued our work at two institutions serving over **700 at-risk youth**: **Harkins House** in Hillsboro, Oregon, and **Children's Home of Easton** in Easton, Pennsylvania. Each institution received a custom library and implemented monthly Book Clubs. With the help of our partner organizations and Dr. Christian Tatu, professor at Lafayette College, we conducted impact assessment research to understand the impact of a book club on teens who have not succeeded in school.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 85% of juvenile offenders have reading problems. Compounded by violent learned behavior, these youth are disempowered through a vicious cycle of poverty, crime, and violence. The Book Club effort fights to change the perspective of at-risk youth, who feel as though they cannot turn their lives around because of the previous choices they've made.

## Book Club Reading List

- *HOOT*
- *The Hunger Games*
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*
- *The Maze Runner*
- *The Giver*
- *The Outsiders*
- *Stargirl*
- *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*
- *Witch and Wizard*
- *The Lord of the Rings: The Hobbit*
- *True Legend*
- *Lord of the Flies*
- *Eragon*
- *Scorch Trials*
- *Help Yourself*

Through the positive interactions at the Book Clubs, Judith's Reading Room research found that:

- Reading gives Book Club participants a sense of **pride** and **accomplishment**
- Participants believe they **gain valuable confidence** in speaking in groups
- Book Club offers **leadership opportunities** for members
- Book Club **exposes students to ideas** that differ from their experiences; but,
- Book Club also showed that participants' **experiences are not unique** and that others have experienced similar struggles

In May, award-winning author Jerry Spinelli met with Children's Home of Easton Book Club members.

He told the young men how all four of his first novels were rejected. But he persevered, and stressed the importance of dealing with failure. His overarching message:

***“Never give up.”***



Newberry Award-winning author Jerry Spinelli spoke to Children's Home of Easton Book Club members and Judith's Reading Room Board of Directors before a performance of his book *Stargirl*.

# Our Efforts Abroad

For many children, competing in the global economy requires English comprehension. Yet it is nearly impossible to secure children's books in English for schools and children who cannot afford them. Judith's Reading Room has stepped in to fill that gap in the belief that reading is a right, not a privilege and that when we empower others, we empower ourselves.

We respond to American teachers overseas, Peace Corps volunteers, and accredited nonprofit organizations who want to teach English but for lack of children's books in that language, they are not able to help children.

In 2013, we added Costa Rica, Cambodia, Japan, Namibia, and China to the growing list of countries impacted by our libraries. Judith's Reading Room can now be found in **10 different countries outside the states.**

*“Literacy is much more than an educational priority – it is the ultimate investment in the future ... We wish to see a century where every child is able to read and to use this skill to gain autonomy.”*

*-Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General*



From Top: Children learn from our books in Costa Rica, Namibia, and Cambodia.

Dedicated on World Book Day, our books effectively increased the school's English language library by 800%.

Children served by these two organizations can now learn English so they can get jobs in the tourist industry thanks to our books.

Until our donation, the school did not have the resources to provide English books below the fifth grade.

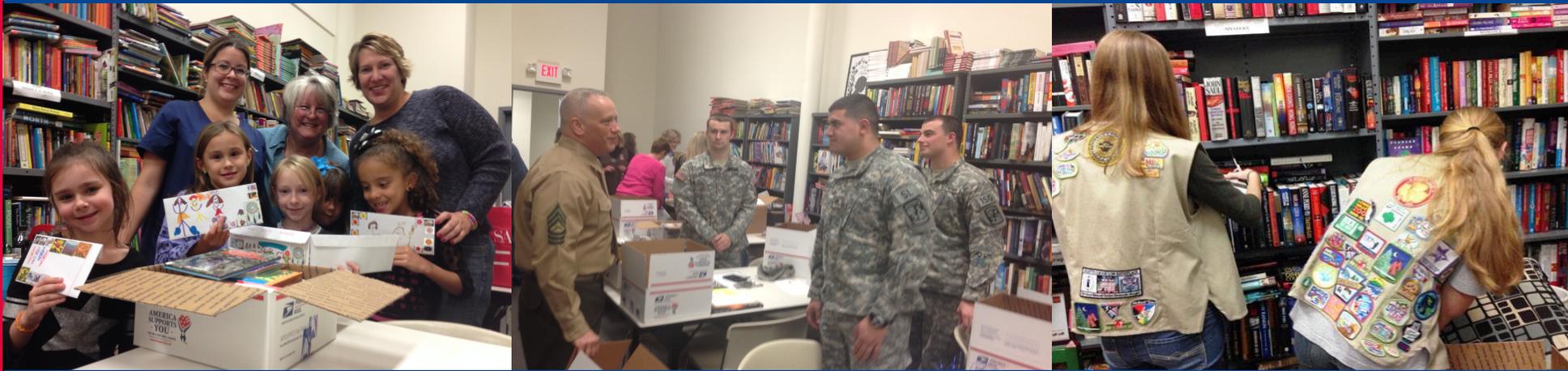
In 2 years, we have donated 2,500 books for 25 schools reaching 6,709 students.

None of the rural students at this school can afford books outside their curriculum; without them, they cannot pass the test to get to high school.

### In 2013, we dedicated these libraries:

- Academia Teocali, San Jose, Costa Rica, 150 children
- A New Day Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 100 children
- Anjali House, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 110 children
- Schlip Primary School, Rehoboth, Namibia, 150 children
- 13 New Libraries in East Java, Indonesia, 2,849 children
- Dachaoshan Middle School, Yunnan Province, China, 600 children

# Boxing Parties...



Every month, local volunteers of all ages come to Judith's Reading Room to pack boxes of books for the troops at our Boxing Party. It's a chance for them to not only browse through great literature, but also to support our military with carefully selected books and heartfelt letters. In December, we celebrated our **45th consecutive month of boxing for the troops**. This year, volunteers packed **10,317 books** worth an impressive **\$98,725**, and shipped them to army and air force bases, aircraft carriers, and to wounded warriors.

Our Boxing Parties also attracted the attention of several local groups with the desire to support the troops. We welcomed the Lehigh Valley SteelHawks football team, Brownie Troop 8886 (*pictured top left*), Girl Scout Troop 6932 (*top right*), and five uniformed service members (*top middle*). Young adults wishing to do good in their community also join us for Boxing Parties, where thousands of books bring peace of mind to those who serve far from home.

*"The man who does not read has no advantage over the man who cannot read."*

*-Mark Twain*

# ...Support the Troops

This year, more VA hospitals reached out to us to bring comfort for those recuperating from war. We began shipping to Steadfast House, a shelter for homeless female veterans and their children in Asheville, North Carolina. For these families, our **887 books** offer a welcomed escape from their tough realities. We're doing the same for homeless male veterans at Allentown Rescue Mission in Allentown, Pennsylvania, with our donation of **713 books**. These books serve as a welcomed escape from the devastating after-effects of war trauma.

Canandaigua VA, New York, also became the eighth VA hospital to join our "VA 100" book donation program this year. This VA hospital in particular is seeing more young men and women veterans with children who are currently returning from active duty. Since November 2010, we've shipped **13,657 books** worth **\$118,844** to nine VA hospitals in four states.

We continue to ship books to the USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH aircraft carrier, where its collection of children's books are used by Sailors to read to their children and a DVD is sent home. So far, we've donated **813 books** worth **\$8,168**.

Our dedication to the servicemen and servicewomen abroad remained as strong as ever, with **37,804 books** worth **\$393,561** sent since our inception. We also established our second library on a military base, this time in Japan.



Lcpl Parish displays the Judith's Reading Room lending library in Japan.

# Volunteers Make the Difference

Judith's Reading Room is an all-volunteer organization, so the people who dedicate their time are the lifeblood of our organization. This year, 1,667 volunteers tirelessly donated 5,750 hours supporting our mission. That's an economic value of \$127,305.\*

Volunteers who go above and beyond the call of duty for Judith's Reading Room are publicly recognized. We choose a Volunteer of the Month and celebrate his or her hard work and contribution to the organization with a special story in our bi-monthly newsletter, BOOKISH. Their name also gets added to the Volunteer Appreciation plaque.

\*Based on Federal IRS guidelines at \$22.14 per hour economic value of volunteer time



Ann Shanley poses with husband Ed and the Volunteer Appreciation plaque. Bob and Eileen Schmidt, pictured below, are also Volunteers of the Month.



# Strength Through Partnership

We actively seek partners in the belief that through working together, we are able to change the lives of underserved communities with integrity and reliability. Thanks to our outstanding partnerships, we have been able to strengthen and widen the impact we make on communities both in the states and around the world. And when we collaborate with organizations, we remain committed to actively working together toward a shared vision of freedom through literacy.

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A New Day Cambodia	Lehigh Valley Health Network
Academia Teocalia	Old Orchard Health Care Center
Advocate Lutheran Children's Hospital	Operation Outreach Afghanistan
American University of Nigeria	Peace Corps Volunteers
Anjali House	Penn State County Extension
Boys and Girls Club of Philadelphia	Remi Foundation
Casa Guadalupe	Rotary Club of Yola-by-Pass, Nigeria
Children's Home of Easton	St. Luke's Hospital and Health Network
Da Vinci Science Center	Teach for China
Fox Chase Cancer Center	The World is Just a Book Away
Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital	USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH Aircraft Carrier
Hackerman-Patz House	Veterans Hospitals
Harkins House	Veterans Sanctuary, Allentown
Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley	Westchester Medical Center
Industrial Technical Mhila School	Westlake School, NJ
Karatu Foundation	Women, Infants & Children Program

# Awards

We always have reason to celebrate our work, but when we are recognized by outside organizations, we redouble our commitment to change the world one book at a time.

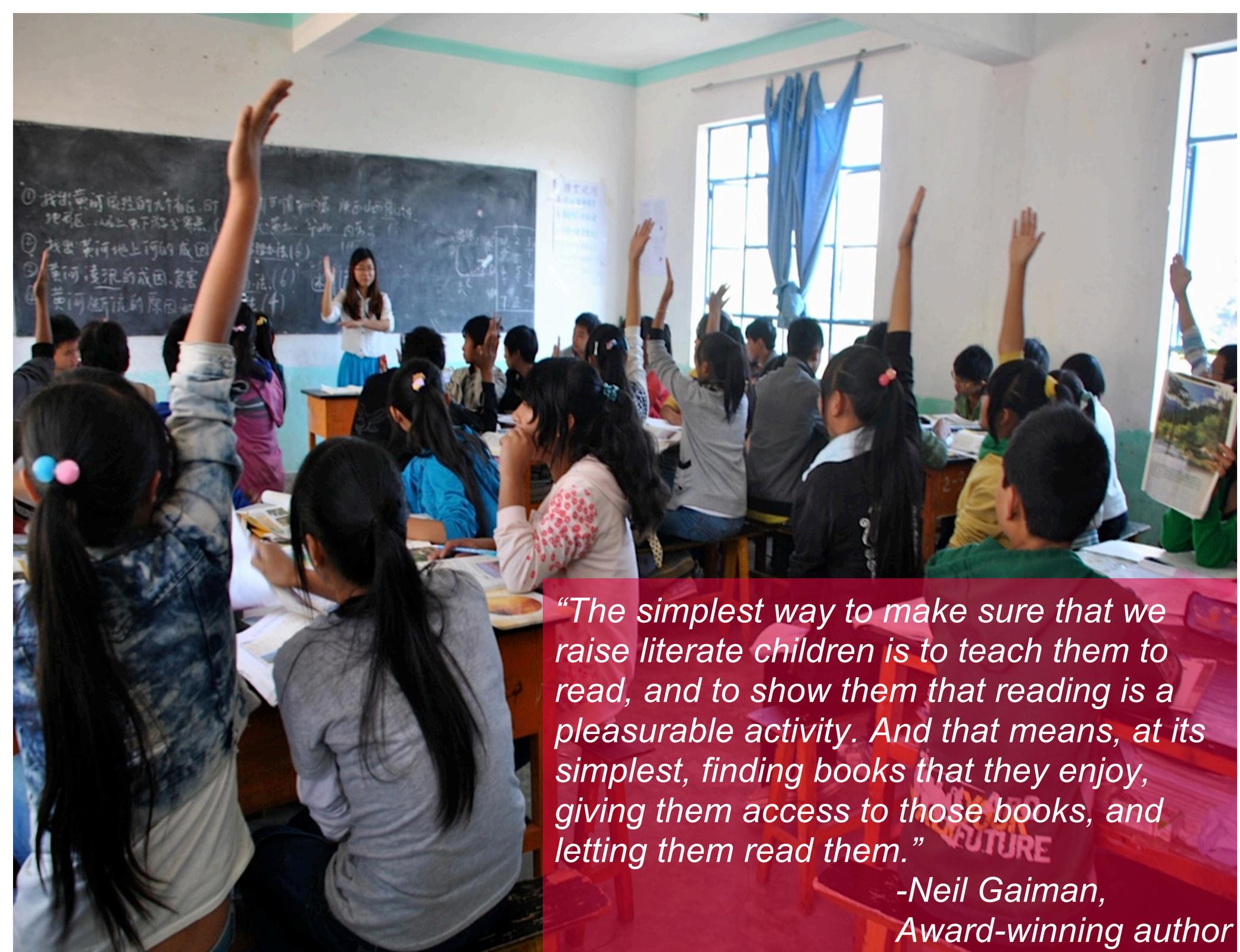
- Wells Fargo Volunteer Service Award, \$25,000 First Place Nationwide, 2011
- Freedom to Read Foundation Judith F. Krug Fund Award, 2012
- Colonial Association of Reading Educators Celebrate Literacy Award, 2013
- Freedom to Read Foundation Judith F. Krug Fund Award, 2013



Cathy Leiber accepts the Wells Fargo Volunteer Service Award.



2013 Celebrate Literacy Award dinner at Cedar Crest College. (L to R: Scott Leiber, Ana Luhrs, Linda Wellstein, Cathy Leiber, Daniel Leiber, Toni Hoffman, Co-President AAUW Easton, and Kathy Sagl, President, Colonial Association of Reading Educators (CARE).



*“The simplest way to make sure that we raise literate children is to teach them to read, and to show them that reading is a pleasurable activity. And that means, at its simplest, finding books that they enjoy, giving them access to those books, and letting them read them.”*

*-Neil Gaiman,  
Award-winning author*

# Testimonials

*“I so love what you’re doing and watching how a good idea, followed up by a committed action, creates unimagined results and miracles.”*

*–Carol Dorey, Donor*

*“What you and your team do is such a wonderful gesture and the crew of the George H. W. Bush is very grateful. We are very excited about getting more books ... Thank you very much for what you've done for our crew; it really makes a difference. You can count on me to support Judith's Reading Room, [as] it plays a huge role in the everyday life of crew and the Dorothy Bush Koch library.”*

*-V/R RP1(SW/AW) Celeste A. Shield*

*“We get a lot of children whose families only speak Spanish but we have been limited to about two books that parents could read to their children. Now with the addition of the new Spanish books that you donated we have quite the little library. Here at Good Shepherd Rehab Hospital for Pediatrics one of our main goals is to help the children and families feel comfortable and safe so that they do well in their therapy, heal faster and have fun while they are here. Providing books in a family’s native language fosters those feelings and enables families and caregivers to have another tool to provide distraction from procedures and comfort when children feel scared.”*

*-Michele Shara, Recreational Therapist, Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital*

*“You are, quite simply, angels providing light to children.”*

*-James Owens, Founder, The World is Just a Book Away*

# Get Involved

From corporate volunteers to retired teachers, hundreds of volunteers support our literacy initiatives. Why not join them?



Contact  
484-661-6151  
5 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Bethlehem, PA 18015

Visit Our Website:  
[www.judithsreadingroom.org](http://www.judithsreadingroom.org)



[fb.com/JudithsReadingRoom](https://fb.com/JudithsReadingRoom)



[twitter.com/JReadingRM](https://twitter.com/JReadingRM)

Judith's Reading Room, established in 2010, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania. Contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.



Students in Indonesia hold up Judith's Reading Room books that will fulfill their great desire to learn and practice their English skills.