



Donations of 2,000 Books Surpass Convention's "Literacy 500" Goal

Alpha Chi's book-collection project for the 2009 national convention theme of literacy exceeded all expectations as about 2,000 children's books, mostly new ones, were brought or sent to the Indianapolis convention for distribution in a service project.

Alpha Chi donated about half of the books to Riley Children's Hospital in Indianapolis, and the others were taken to the nearby city of Anderson for use by three local programs. For the Riley donation, a group of about 20 Alpha Chi students and faculty members spent part of their free time during the convention delivering the books to the hospital and staffing a small literary carnival hospital personnel had arranged in the hospital lobby.

Riley Hospital Project



The big hit of the carnival was the appearance of a student dressed as storybook favorite Clifford, the Big Red Dog. Other delegates helped children select a book of their own, read to them, served refreshments, and worked with the youngsters on crafts projects. Dr. Bill Clemente, sponsor of the Peru State College chapter in Nebraska, shot photos of the event and produced a [slide show](#) that ran at the final session of the convention.

National vice president Dr. Ellen Millsaps of Carson-Newman College, who spearheaded the book project, said she thought the hospital donation was the highlight of the convention. "Although according to hospital regulations we could take only a limited number of delegates," she added, "I am so glad that everyone can see what we experienced through Dr. Clemente's pictures.

"Seeing a little child's joy at having her picture made with Clifford, the Big Red Dog, whose only form of communication was blowing kisses to everyone: priceless! Finding just the right fairytale princess book for a little girl and seeing her smile: priceless! Watching children absorbed in listening to a book being read to them: priceless!"



Souvenir T-shirts

Tim Brown, president of Brown's Graduation Supplies, Alpha Chi's merchandise partner, used his van to transport books from the convention hotel to the hospital. He also worked with Alpha Chi's official jewelry provider, the Herff Jones company, to donate souvenir convention T-shirts that were given to every delegate who contributed a book to "Literacy 500."

Members wore their shirts to the hospital, and at the final session of the convention the entire audience of about 400 donned shirts for a celebration and group photo.



Anderson Project

Slightly more than 1,000 books were sent to Anderson, home of Dr. Blake Janutolo, the National Council secretary and sponsor of the Indiana Alpha chapter at Anderson University. His wife, Trish, a retired college librarian, distributed books to three local programs—the Literacy Coalition of Madison County, a food pantry operated by a local church, and a program called Born Learning, which impresses on parents the necessity of reading and talking to their children from birth on up.

Mrs. Janutolo noted that more than 100 books in the collection were suitable for the youngest children and were selected for use by Born Learning to include in gift bags for parents attending childbirth classes.

She added, "I believe each program is working hard to promote literacy and improvement in the lives of children. The pantry was so thankful for the books because they were going to purchase books for their program. At least for a while their resources can be used for purchasing food for distribution."



Keynote Speaker

On the opening night of the convention, [prize-winning children's author David Harrison](#) of Springfield, Missouri, gave the keynote address at the banquet attended by 400. He highlighted the importance of teaching young people to read and to love to read, illustrating his talk with passages from his numerous books of poetry and prose.