



My Own Book FUND

THE MISSION OF MY OWN BOOK FUND is simple and urgent: to foster the love of reading and the joy of book ownership among New York City's inner-city children.

We do this by talking with third-grade classes and their teachers/ principals about books and reading, and then we take the classes to a local bookstore where each child may choose \$50 worth of his or her very own books. It sounds simple, but the results are profound. Studies show an important link between having books in the home and a child's chance of future success in life. We aim to create that chance of success for those who might not have the opportunity any other way.

Founder Burt Freeman saw the need for this program in 1999, when he learned from children at the East Harlem Tutorial Program that they had very little experience with reading, had few or no books at home, and that most of them lived nowhere near a bookstore. The result of those conversations was a trial program at East Harlem Tutorial that laid the foundation for the program we sponsor today. The enthusiastic response from children, parents, and teachers was immediate and heartwarming. Burt knew he had touched on something very important.

Since 1999, MOBF has blossomed. In cooperation with the Fund for Public Schools — a 501 (c) (3) corporation established by the NYC Department of Education — we now sponsor 37 schools (a number we're very eager to increase). In fact, in school year 2007-2008, some 40 volunteers organized over 150 visits in all five boroughs for over 4000 children, who purchased almost 24,000 books!

The need for our program is great. The schools we sponsor fit specific criteria: 90% or more of the students qualify for the free lunch program, and there is no major bookstore within two miles. Sadly, over 400 public elementary schools across New York City's five boroughs fit these criteria.

MY OWN BOOK FUND AND LITERACY:

Literacy is more important than ever before, and timing is critical. The National Institute for Literacy says that third grade is a crucial time in a child's reading life: "By the end of third grade, a child must read with ease and understanding to take advantage of the learning opportunities in fourth grade and beyond." And many studies have demonstrated the link between low reading skills and poverty, crime, substance abuse, and other community issues.

WHAT SETS MY OWN BOOK APART FROM OTHER PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE CHILDREN'S LITERACY?

My Own Book does not simply give books to kids. It introduces children to the pleasures of browsing in a bookstore, invites them to think about the comparative value of different books for their lives, and encourages them to start building their own personal libraries. Most important, the children are invited to make their own selections, and instructed to spend \$50 on books just for themselves. Taking charge of their own choices and experiencing the thrill of book ownership gives these young students a new "ownership" of reading.





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WHO MAKES MOBF HAPPEN?

We are all volunteers, dedicated New Yorkers who are delighted to share our love of books and reading with the city's school children.

How can I become involved in My Own Book Fund?

There are many different ways:

→ REPRESENT MOBF IN THE CLASSROOM AND/OR THE BOOKSTORE.

Talk with the kids and share discoveries about the world of books. Just a few hours a year can be so rewarding. You get so much more than you give! Encourage your friends, family, and colleagues to become volunteers, too.

→ JOIN OUR READING CIRCLE

- \$50** helps one child start a personal library
- \$500** helps a reading group start their libraries
- \$1000** sponsors a third-grade class
- \$5000** sponsors an entire school's third graders

Or choose your own level: every dollar helps a child discover the delights of reading. And for every dollar you give, 93% is used to pay for the children's books. (Just 7% covers all our administrative costs.)

→ BRING YOUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO SPONSOR A SCHOOL.

It only takes \$5000 to give a school's third graders this life-changing experience. Local businesses and organizations, houses of worship, co-op and condo residents, and individuals can join together to give an invaluable gift to our next generation.

→ **SHARE YOUR TIME AND TALENT WITH MOBF.** Whether your skill is writing, PR, fundraising, marketing, or something else, it could be a terrific gift to the My Own Book Program and the children we serve.

Browse the My Own Book Fund website www.mobf.org to see what the joy of reading looks like, and to learn more about us. Feel free to contact us about donating, volunteering, or with any questions you may have about the program.

WHAT TEACHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT MY OWN BOOK FUND:

My Own Book has changed the reading habits of my students. When they're independent reading and I say it's time to close their books, a collective sigh echoes in the room....Thank you for promoting literacy in my class but most importantly in my students' hearts.

They can't wait to open their new books and read.

They've been taking their books down to lunch with them. They talk about how they've been reading them at home.

They loved picking out books on topics they enjoyed...they would ask me, "can we read our books today?"

The students are more excited to finish books so the next one can be started....Thank you for including our school in your wonderful program.

WHAT PARENTS HAVE SAID ABOUT MY OWN BOOK FUND:

She takes her books everywhere. No one can make her leave them. She won't stop reading.

My child was very excited about the trip to Barnes and Noble. He came home very happy with many new, interesting books which he reread with his little sister.

It was a nice experience for the kids to go and shop themselves. He is more interested in reading since the day he went. Thank you.

WHAT THIRD-GRADERS HAVE SAID ABOUT MY OWN BOOK FUND:

I bought a poetry book and read it and I loved it and so I wrote a poem myself.

There's a surprise in every book!

They have so many books I didn't know what to pick. It was so exciting.

Now I get to read whenever I want!

It was awesome. I got to buy 8 good books!

It was so fun. I could not sleep because I was so excited about going.

You do not know how much I thank you and you do not know how much I love these books.