



EDUCATION

Publisher Aims to Help Poor Children Read More Books

October 02, 2021

A donation by a famous writer has helped start an effort, called the United States of Readers, to help poor children read more books.

The classroom program is being launched by Scholastic Book Clubs with a donation of \$1.5 million from the writer James Patterson.

Scholastic announced the program recently. It aims to bring books to 32,000 poor children who are in kindergarten to eighth grade.

Judy Newman is president of Scholastic Book Clubs. She said in a statement that in many communities people do not have enough money to buy books. So she said her company “needed to come up with an **alternative** to our tried and true model, because every child needs to be able to choose and own books, and see themselves as a reader!”

Scholastic is a large publisher of books for children and educational materials. Its goal is to get books into schools to increase **literacy**. The company has publishing rights in the U.S. for books like the Harry Potter and Hunger Games series.

A gift by Patterson helped start the new program. He is credited with selling millions of books. He has already donated more than \$10 million to teachers and students through Scholastic.

He said in a statement that he has supported literacy for many years. He believes reading skills are important for the country.

“In many cases, kids simply need access to books — and especially books they want to read — to fall in love with reading, **characters**, and stories.”

Patterson added that the program “will bring books to those schools and communities that need them the most, and ones that we haven’t served before.”

Scholastic describes the program on its website. It says the United States of Readers program targets children in schools serving poor communities that receive federal educational money. The company said it has chosen a limited number of schools to take part this year but hopes to expand the program in the coming years.

I’m Mario Ritter Jr.

Hillel Italie reported this story for the Associated Press. Mario Ritter Jr. adapted it for VOA Learning English. Hai Do was the editor.

Words in This Story

alternative *-n.* offering or expressing a choice; not usual or traditional

literacy *-n.* the ability to read and write

character *-n.* a person who appears in a story, book, play, movie or television show

We want to hear from you. Write to us in the Comments section, and [visit our Facebook page](#).