

From: Zneimer, Lia <LZneimer@Scholastic.com>
To: Veldran, KatherineKatherineVeldran@gov.sc.gov
Date: 3/19/2014 5:38:13 PM
Subject: 2014 Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge

Hi Katherine,

I hope this email finds you well! I worked with Rachel Card last year but my email to her just bounced back and she listed you on her out of office; I'm hoping you might be able to point me in the right direction. First Gentleman Haley and Governor Haley have both been wonderfully supportive of children's literacy; every summer, we invite the Governors' Spouses to serve as Reading Ambassadors of our annual Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge. Now in its 8th year, the program encourages kids to read all summer long to slow the learning losses that often occur when school is not in session. Last summer, as the First Gentleman was deployed, Governor Haley kindly volunteered to serve as a Reading Ambassador in his absence. We'd be honored if the First Gentleman would like to join us again this year as a Reading Ambassador.

Scholastic [recently conducted a survey](#) in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, asking 20,000 of America's public school teachers their thoughts about the teaching profession. [State-level data for South Carolina is available here](#), but on the whole, when asked about what parents can do to help ensure student success in school, **91% of teachers said it was extremely or very helpful for parents to make sure their children had access to books at home or through a school library.** By signing on as a Reading Ambassador, the First Gentleman would be putting books directly into the hands of students who might not otherwise have access, thereby helping to slow the "Summer Slide"—the learning or reading skill losses that occur during the summer months when school is not in session.

In exchange for the First Gentleman's participation as a Reading Ambassador, Scholastic will donate 500 books to the elementary school(s) of his choice and include his name in a national press release announcing this year's Reading Ambassadors and highlighting the work they are doing to support children's literacy across the country. We would also welcome the opportunity to help First Gentleman Haley coordinate a reading event at an elementary school of his choice.

Once I receive confirmation of the First Gentleman's desire to participate as a Reading Ambassador, I will send the book donation form, along with information about how to access our online Reading Ambassadors hub, where you'll be able to access downloadable worksheets, facts about summer reading, and additional resources.

Below, please find the official Summer Reading Challenge invitation letter that was distributed to the Governors' Spouses at the Winter NGA Meeting last month. Thank you again for all your help, and for your continued support of Scholastic's commitment to literacy. I look forward to hearing from you! Please feel free to contact me with any questions at (212) 343-6901.

Best,
Lia

Lia Zneimer
Writer/Producer, Social Media & Internal Communications
Scholastic Inc.
557 Broadway | New York, NY | 10012
212.343.6901 | lzneimer@scholastic.com
www.scholastic.com

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February 22, 2014

Dear First Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last summer, 45 Governors' Spouses and Governors came together as Reading Ambassadors for the Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge to send a powerful message to families and educators in their states about the importance of reading during the summer months. Thanks to the Governors' Spouses and the NGA, the 2013 Scholastic Summer

Reading Challenge was a tremendous success, with children from around the world reading more than 176 million minutes and setting a new world record for summer reading.

We are proud of our past success, but we know it is not enough to halt the “summer slide” that impacts student achievement across our nation. We hope you will join us as a Reading Ambassador for the 2014 Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge to help us get more kids reading, and kids reading more, over the summer break. The Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge is a free program designed to keep parents informed and kids motivated to read over the summer months and, in doing so, slow the “summer slide”—the learning losses that take place during the long break from school.

A national survey of parents and kids conducted by Scholastic and The Harrison Group found that having reading role-model parents or a large book collection at home has a greater impact on kids’ reading frequency than does household income, and yet, nearly half of parents feel their children do not spend enough time reading books for fun – the kind of reading practice that is critical in order for children to build stamina, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Children need access to books and time to read at home every day, particularly during the summer when school is not in session.

Research by Dr. Richard Allington of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville found that learning or reading skill losses during the summer months are cumulative, creating a wider gap each year between more proficient and less proficient students. By the time a struggling reader reaches middle school, summer reading loss has accumulated to a two-year lag in reading achievement. One of the best ways to combat such losses is to encourage summer reading.

The 2014 Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge once again invites students to set a new world record for summer reading. Starting May 5, students can visit www.scholastic.com/summer to sign up for the Challenge and log the time they spend reading. All minutes will be applied to the students’ school totals, and the top 20 schools with the most minutes read will be featured in the 2015 edition of the *Scholastic Book of World Records*. We believe that with your help, we can increase involvement of schools in your state, encourage more children to read, and once again set a new record.

The Reading Ambassadors are an integral part of the Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge and play a critical role in providing students nationwide with access to books they will want to read. Each Reading Ambassador pledges to reinforce the importance of summer reading, and a majority hold summer reading events at a local school or library in their state. Over the past five summers, the Governors’ Spouses’ involvement as Reading Ambassadors has resulted in nearly **100,000 books** being donated to children across the continental U.S. and its outlying territories.

As a Reading Ambassador, you will be supporting families and schools in your state by:

- ☐ Sending a message that summer reading is critical to our children’s success;
- ☐ Supporting your State Office of Education or district leaders by reinforcing the importance of keeping students’ skills sharp when school is not in session;
- ☐ Making the home-to-school connection during the transitional summer months;
- ☐ Encouraging students and families to read every day.

As part of this initiative, Scholastic will make an in-kind donation of 500 books to elementary school students at a school of your choice, and will include your name in a national press release announcing the 2014 Reading Ambassadors to highlight all you are doing to support children’s literacy. In addition, Scholastic would welcome the opportunity to work with your office to help arrange for you to host a school reading event for students in your state before the end of the school year. We can provide books, posters, book lists, classroom activities, and fun giveaways for the students participating in your event.

We hope you will join the Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge this year. Kyle Good, Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications at Scholastic, is ready to work with your office to let all the children and families of your state know that you are a Reading Ambassador. Kyle can be reached directly at (212) 343-4563 or kylegood@scholastic.com. Further, we would happy to discuss messaging your involvement as a Reading Ambassador to your State Office of Education or District leaders. If we can try to be helpful with initiatives or policies that encourage literacy—the cornerstone of all learning—Jessie Lyons, Director of Government Relations for Scholastic, can be reached at (212) 343-4817, or jlyons@scholastic.com.

Thank you, and welcome to the Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge 2014.

Sincerely,

Richard Robinson
Chairman, President and CEO, Scholastic Inc.