

# The Ben Carson Reading Project



[www.carsonscholars.org](http://www.carsonscholars.org)



## What is the Carson Scholars Fund?

### Our Founders, Our Goals

The Carson Scholars Fund is a nonprofit organization founded in 1994 by retired world-renowned neurosurgeon Dr. Benjamin Carson and his wife, Candy. The Carson Scholars Fund operates under an educational mission. The first mission awards college scholarships to students in grades 4–11 based on high academic achievement and humanitarianism.

The second mission, the Ben Carson Reading Project is designed to combat illiteracy and to promote leisure reading as a key to unlocking a child's full potential. The first Ben Carson Reading Room was established in 2000 at Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School in Aberdeen, Maryland.

Reading rooms promote an encouraging attitude towards lifelong reading and learning. Ben Carson Reading Rooms are vibrant spaces located within a school — packed full of the most popular and exciting books and magazines.

Dr. Ben Carson credits reading as being the catalyst to his success. As a young child, Ben was a terrible student. After bringing home an abysmal report card, his mother, Sonya, with only a third grade education, searched for ways to improve her sons' academic performances. Ben's mother came up with a solution. She required Ben and his brother, Curtis, to turn off the television and to read two books a week from the Detroit Public Library and to submit written book reports to her. While she had difficulty reading the book reports, the results had the desired effect. Through his mother's encouragement and his newfound love of learning, Ben went from the worst student to being the one of the brightest students.



*“It’s so exciting to see kids developing a love of learning and that’s what this is all about.”*

—Candy Carson,  
Co-founder of the Carson Scholars Fund





## The Ben Carson Reading Project

### What is the Ben Carson Reading Project?

The Ben Carson Reading Project provides funding for schools to create a literacy-enriched environment for children to develop their reading skills. This cozy, nurturing setting promotes the importance of everyday leisure reading.

The Ben Carson Reading Project is designed to provide students with over 500 books from a variety of authors, genres and topics. Reading rooms are bright and inviting. Every reading room is decorated with colorful artwork reinforcing Dr. Carson's THINK BIG philosophy of academic achievement and dedication to helping others.

### What is the difference between a Ben Carson Reading Room and a library?

While many students have the opportunity to visit the school library, most of the time spent in the library is devoted to curricula instruction, researching a subject or writing book reports. For many students a visit to the library is an arduous task rather than a pleasant experience. The Ben Carson Reading Project allows schools the opportunity to purchase high-interest reading materials. In addition, students rarely have an opportunity to select their own reading materials in a classroom setting. In a Ben Carson Reading Room, students have the freedom to select their own books. When students choose what they read, they read more.

**Did you know?** *“Nearly every reading room coordinator involved with the program recommends that reading rooms should be installed in every school.”*

—Source: Formative Evaluation Research Associates



## Our Impact: Outreach, Growth, Potential

In an educational environment of budget cuts and competing priorities, the Ben Carson Reading Project has grown by leaps and bounds, demonstrating a commitment to our mission and to the promise of our nation's youth.

As of July 2015 over 60,000 students have had access to Ben Carson Reading Rooms. There are more than 130 Ben Carson Reading Rooms located in 17 states and the District of Columbia. Reading rooms can be found in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington D.C.

The Project has placed over 66,000 high-interest books into students' hands. Eighty-five percent of Ben Carson Reading Rooms serve students in Title I schools.



### The Ben Carson Reading Project nurtures the entire student body.

*Here is what educators are saying about the Ben Carson Reading Project:*

"Student feedback is so positive. Reading is promoted throughout the school. The room itself is wonderful and cheerful. I think we have 'hooked' many students on reading!"

"The reading room gives the students the opportunity to have a quiet zone after lunch. They can relax and lay around on the pillows and beanbags."

"I have a student who surprised me – she is finally motivated to read because of the Ben Carson Reading Room. She has already completed two levels in the first two weeks it's been open."

"The Ben Carson Reading Project should be in every school."

*Here is what students are saying about Ben Carson Reading Rooms:*

"The Ben Carson Reading Room is better than lunch!"

"For the first time in my life I can say 'I want to read!'"





## Ben Carson Reading Day: An Annual Event

Ben Carson Reading Day is an annual literacy event held each November in conjunction with American Education Week. This national day of reading is designed to raise awareness of the importance of everyday leisure reading.

In honor of Ben Carson Reading Day, reading room schools across the country engage students in activities to highlight reading. Special events have included: guest readers (such as local government officials and celebrities), viewing a recording of Dr. Carson narrating a children's book, author visits and other activities.

**Did you know?** *“Sixty-one percent of low-income families have no books at all in their homes for their children. While low-income children have – on average – roughly four children’s books in their homes, a team of researchers recently concluded that nearly two-thirds of the low-income families they have studied owned no books for their children.”*

—Source: Reading Literacy in the United States, 1996



## Reading rooms are the best investments the Carson Scholars Fund can offer.

For a contribution of \$15,000, an entire student body benefits from the addition of a reading room. The funding is used to purchase books, furniture and décor, and reading incentives.

For a contribution of \$2,500, you can become a reading room supporter and help provide books and furnishings for a Ben Carson Reading Room. Infusing new reading materials keeps students engaged and inspired.

**Did you know?** *“Reading for fun drops off dramatically as children get older, and rates among all children – especially teens – have fallen precipitously in recent years.”*

—Source: Children, Teens and Reading:  
A Common Sense Media Research Brief





# Thank you to our sponsors



Contino Family Foundation | Country Club Optimist Club | Covenant Guild, Inc.  
The Deaver Phoenix Foundation | Dillard Family Foundation | Harry F. Duncan Foundation  
Beverly K. & Jerome M. Fine Foundation, Inc. | France-Merrick Foundation | Phyllis and Louis Friedman  
The Gill Family | Mike and Marlene Grossnickle Young | The Phil Hardin Foundation & QSD Imagination Library  
Harford United Charities, Inc. | The Hearst Foundations | Hillendale Ladies Book Club  
Emmert Hobbs Foundation | Dr. and Mrs. Donald Janower | Kahlert Foundation  
Richard Lumsden Foundation | Palm Beach County Chapter of the CSF | Dean T. Wickstrom





# Ben Carson Reading Project

Carson Scholars Fund, Inc.  
305 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 310  
Towson, Maryland 21204

[www.carsonscholars.org](http://www.carsonscholars.org)