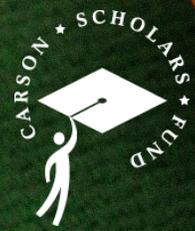


The Reading Room Project in California



Esau Portillo
Student



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 Reading Room Project is designed to combat illiteracy and to promote leisure reading as a key to unlocking a child's full potential. The first 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. 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 Reading Room Project

What is the Reading Room Project?

The Reading Room 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 Reading Room 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.

Why is the Reading Room Project coming to California?

Thanks to the generosity of a San Diego couple, funding has been earmarked for reading rooms in California with an interest in Southern California. This gift will allow young children to have access to high-interest books to help develop their reading skills and foster a lifelong love of reading.

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 Reading Room Project has grown by leaps and bounds, demonstrating a commitment to our mission and to the promise of our nation's youth.

More than 170 reading rooms have been established in 22 states and the District of Columbia. Reading rooms can be found in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington, D.C.

The Project has placed over 85,000 high-interest books into students' hands. Eighty-five percent of reading rooms serve students in Title I schools.



The Reading Room Project nurtures the entire student body.

Here is what educators are saying about the Reading Room Project:

"This reading room oasis has opened the eyes and minds for so many of our students to things they have only dreamed about. It has provided an AMAZING experience for our students and faculty."

"Our Reading Room is so important to the culture of learning at our center. It provides a warm, safe place for kids to cuddle up with a good book and uncover the mysteries of life."

"The Reading Room has been an amazing addition to our school. Students and classroom teachers look forward to enjoying time in there each week. The availability of a comfortable and attractive space dedicated to reading has expanded the opportunity for us to utilize volunteers from our community."

"The Reading Room has opened up more opportunities for literacy at our school."

Here is what students are saying about reading rooms:

"Before the reading room I read, but after the reading room I was inspired to read even more. I finally met my AR reading goal!"

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



Reading Room Program Events

The Reading Room Program is supported by an annual workshop and a reading day. The workshop is open to school partners with active reading rooms nationwide. Web links are provided to coordinators to view the featured speakers and gain insight into the program.

The National Day of Reading is an annual literacy event held each November in conjunction with American Education Week. The day is designed to raise awareness of the importance of everyday leisure reading. To celebrate, reading room schools across the country engage students in activities to highlight reading. Special events have included: viewing a narration of a children's book, guest readers (such as local government officials and celebrities), 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

What is the difference between a 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 Reading Room 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 reading room, students have the freedom to select their own books. When students choose what they read, they read more.

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



Current Reading Rooms in California



Allison Elementary School
Pomona



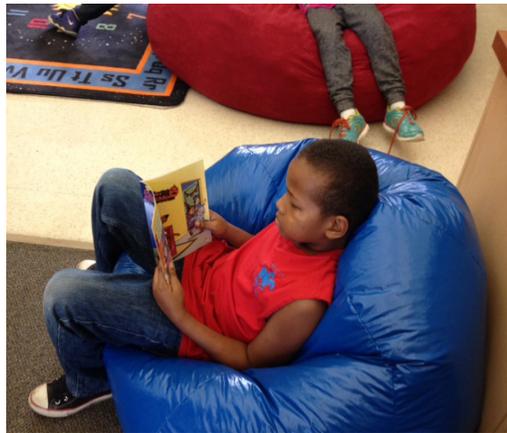
Bonsall West
Elementary School
Oceanside



John Bidwell Elementary School
Sacramento



John Sloat Elementary School
Sacramento



John Still K-8 School
Sacramento



Northridge Elementary School
Fair Oaks

Sacramento

Abraham Lincoln Elementary School
David Lubin Elementary School
Ethel I. Baker Elementary School
H.W. Harkness Elementary School

Hollywood Park Elementary School
John Cabrillo Elementary School
Susan B. Anthony Elementary School

Carmichael

Starr King K-8 School

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Some of our corporate sponsors include:



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