

# 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 now 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 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 read two books a week from the Detroit Public Library and 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.

\*\*\* Some Ben Carson Reading Rooms are referred to as Think Big Reading Rooms. \*\*\*

### 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.

**250+**  
**Reading Rooms**  
**in 23 states**

**\$3,500,000**  
**invested in**  
**the program**

**125,500+**  
**books**  
**purchased**

**115,750**  
**student**  
**participants**

*"In a time where most reading has been on a computer screen, it is more critical than ever to get books in the hands of children."*

—Christina Lylo,  
Youth's Benefit Elementary

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

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

*"The reading room provides a calm and inviting environment for children to take a break from academics and to focus on their social-emotional well-being."*

Jennifer Richard – Chesterton Elementary

*"Our reading room provides students the opportunity to cultivate their love for reading in an inviting space that sparks joy and interest in books of all genres."*

Sarah Hinton – L.O. Kimberly Elementary

*"The Ben Carson Reading Room provides the children with a place to enjoy the feeling of getting lost in a book. It builds excitement, reading stamina, and elicits conversations about books."*

Candy Kramer – Sward School

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

*"I like how you can pick a book, sit down anywhere, and let your imagination take flight."*

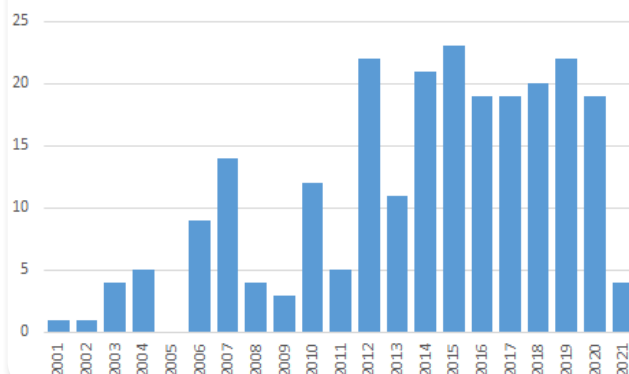
Student – The Learning Choice Academy

*"I love the Reading Room, it's a great place to go and relax and enjoy some quiet reading. The place is so comfy and peaceful and great place to get away from all the noise."*

Student – Beaver Falls Middle School



Reading Rooms Opened Per Year







## National Day of Reading: An Annual Event

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

In honor of National Day of Reading, 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 book narrative, author visits and other activities.



*“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.”*

—Frederick Douglass



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

For a investment of **\$17,500**, an entire student body benefits from the addition of a reading room. The funding is used to purchase books, furniture, décor and reading incentives.

For a investment 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?** *“Students who choose what they read and have an informal environment in which to read tend to be more motivated, read more and show greater language and literacy development.”*

—Source: Literacy Project, 2019



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