



WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

CARSON SCHOLARS FUND

IMPORTANT 2023 DATES

JANUARY 24

Reading Room Opening
Ensley Elementary
Pensacola, FL

JANUARY 27

Reading Room Opening
Dwight D. Eisenhower
Elementary School
Palm Beach Gardens, FL

JANUARY 31

Reading Room Opening
Orchard View
Elementary School
Delray Beach, FL

FEBRUARY 17

Palm Beach, FL Dinner with
Tony Orlando & Dr. Carson

FEBRUARY 18

Naples, FL Dinner with
Tony Orlando & Dr. Carson

MARCH 2023

Notification sent to all
winners/non-winners

APRIL/MAY 2023

2023 Carson Scholars
Awards Banquets across
the country

SEPTEMBER 18

2nd Annual Maryland
Charity Golf Outing

[Recapping 2022 at CSF](#)

In 2022 the Carson Scholars Fund awarded its 10,567th scholarship. 547 new scholars were awarded, and 803 students were recognized for continuing to strive for excellence. Movies...

[Scholarship Season Update](#)

Applications for the 2023 Scholarship Season have been submitted! From the CSF to all educators, thank you for taking the time to nominate students who achieve academic excellence...

[2022 National Day of Reading Success](#)

The Carson Scholars Fund was "jazzed" to present the 17th Annual National Day of Reading, celebrated during the week of November 14th. Since 2005, the CSF's National Day...

[2022 Giving Tuesday Success](#)

On November 29, 2022, the CSF participated in #GivingTuesday, a Global Day of Giving. Giving Tuesday is a day that encourages people to join together to give back...

[Year-End Giving](#)

Year-end is a time of reflection, hope and giving. It is also one of the most important times of the year for a non-profit. Most donations to non-profits occur in the last three months of the....

[Reading Room News and Updates](#)

As we say goodbye to 2022, we like to take a moment to reflect on what has been a momentous year for the Ben Carson Reading Project. In February, we opened the 250th Ben Carson...

[St. Thomas More Reading Room Opening by Candy Carson](#)

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2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2022 the Carson Scholars Fund awarded its 10,567th scholarship. 547 new scholars were awarded, and 803 students were recognized for continuing to strive for excellence. Movie premieres were held in seven locations across the United States honoring these young scholars for their accomplishments. Currently over 3,000 K-12 schools have participated in the scholarship program (nominated a student) since inception. One day our goal is to have a Carson Scholar in every eligible school in the United States. More than \$8 million has been paid out on behalf of our scholars to over 800 colleges and universities.



Regarding the Ben Carson/Think Big Reading Project, in 2022, we are thrilled to share that our 263rd reading room was opened and became operational. With over 500 books guaranteed in each room, that means over 300,000 books have been put in the hands of young readers. Our relationship does not end with the opening of a reading room. Through your generosity, we are able to replenish worn books and update rooms as the need arises. Our National Day of Reading also provides an opportunity for all participating schools to join together to celebrate the importance of reading in a child's life.





APPLICATIONS ARE IN!



SCHOLARSHIP SEASON UPDATE

Applications for the 2023 Scholarship Season have been submitted!

2023 Scholars will be announced the first week of March!

From the CSF to all educators, thank you for taking the time to write meaningful recommendation letters and nominate students who achieve academic excellence, serve their communities and go above and beyond in all they do. You play a crucial role in our scholarship process!

2023 Carson Scholar Nominees and returning Carson Scholars, thank you for working hard to complete your application and showcase your accomplishments. Our staff is consistently amazed by your intelligence and philanthropic endeavors.

Our judges will be working hard over the next few months to review the applications. If you are interested in scoring applications, please reach out to rbrown@carsonscholars.org. We'd love your help!

To our nominees, educators and volunteers, thank you! You prove time and time again that we are **BETTER TOGETHER!**

SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER 18, 2023



CARSON SCHOLARS FUND

2ND ANNUAL MARYLAND CHARITY GOLF OUTING

CATTAIL CREEK COUNTRY CLUB

3600 CATTAIL CREEK DRIVE | GLENWOOD, MD 21738

JOIN US FOR AN INTIMATE
EVENING WITH

Tony Orlando

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Ben Carson

Saturday, February 18, 2023

6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Grey Oaks Country Club

2400 GREY OAKS DRIVE NORTH
NAPLES, FL 34105



CLICK TO PURCHASE TICKETS

2022 GIVING TUESDAY SUCCESS

On November 29, 2022, the CSF participated in #GivingTuesday, a Global Day of Giving. Giving Tuesday is a day that encourages people to join together to give back. It was selected as a day at the beginning of the *Season of Giving* on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving. The hope is that as many sit around the Thanksgiving table and share what they are grateful for, the gratitude will extend beyond them to non-profits and others who may have need. At the CSF, we are so grateful for the generosity of our donors. We recognize that we could not perform our missions to empower children to value education and strive for success and compassion in life without the generosity of others. On #GivingTuesday a very benevolent donor established a match up to \$20,000. She challenged others to give. We are so pleased to share those gifts exceeded \$20,000. A whopping \$24,135.58 was given on Giving Tuesday. Our generous donor was so thrilled with the donor response to her offer that she kindly doubled the entire amount raised. Our total for this one day of giving was \$48,271.16. It is always amazing to see what can be accomplished when we work together for good. We thank all of you who participated in Giving Tuesday.

Our generous donor just shared that the #GivingTuesday donations will be 100% matched thanks to your generosity and support for youth education!



YEAR-END GIVING

Year-end is a time of reflection, hope and giving. It is also one of the most important times of the year for a non-profit. Most donations to non-profits occur in the last three months of the year, but 30% of all annual donations are made in December.



At the Carson Scholars Fund, this trend is no different. Year-end giving is a critical time for fundraising. We cannot truly express our gratitude in words regarding the generosity that occurs all year long, but especially in the final few months of the year. During these months, we ask our supporters to provide funding for scholarships, participate in Giving Tuesday and to consider funding larger projects like reading rooms and endowing schools. These gifts provide us with the much-needed funding to execute our missions all year. As we end the year, we also look to the future. These

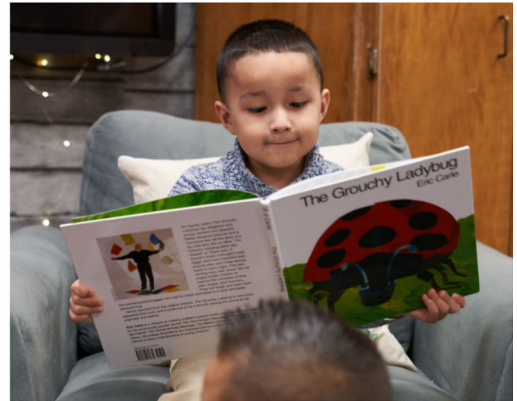
gifts provide us with the opportunity to continue our important work for another year. We cannot thank you enough for including us in your generosity.

We know that we are better when we work together!

READING ROOM NEWS

As we say goodbye to 2022, we like to take a moment to reflect on what has been a momentous year for the Ben Carson Reading Project. In February, we opened the 250th Ben Carson Reading Room at Henderson Elementary School in Midland, Texas. We also witnessed history with the opening of the 50th Think Big Reading Room sponsored by the Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust. We ended the year on a high note with the opening of the 263rd reading room at Chesterton Elementary in San Diego, California since the program's inception in 2000.

As we look forward to 2023, we are filled with great expectations and vast possibilities. Due to friendraising efforts by Harvey Oyer III, this year we are poised to open six reading rooms in Palm Beach County, Florida. In addition, we will see eight Ben Carson Reading Rooms pop-up in Midland, Texas and the surrounding area. The four-member reading room team is energized, enthusiastic and ready to seize every opportunity in the upcoming days, weeks and months.



Rusk Elementary:

Alice in Wonderland, the beloved children's story by Lewis Carroll, has come to life in the Ben Carson Reading Room at Rusk Elementary School. The whimsical murals feature characters from the book, including seven-year-old protagonist Alice, The Cheshire Cat and The Caterpillar.

Colorful, vibrant murals adorn the walls with most of the artwork created by the Legacy High School art department. This is the second Ben Carson Reading Room to be established in Midland. The first reading room was established at Henderson Elementary in February 2022.

Click here to view the media coverage:

[Rusk Elementary opens Ben Carson Reading Room | newswest9.com](https://www.newswest9.com/story/news/education/2022/02/22/rusk-elementary-ben-carson-reading-room/7005557002/)

[Rusk Elementary in Midland gets its own Ben Carson Reading Room \(chron.com\)](https://www.chron.com/story/news/education/2022/02/22/rusk-elementary-ben-carson-reading-room/7005557002/)

2022 NATIONAL DAY OF READING

The Carson Scholars Fund was “jazzed” to present the 17th Annual National Day of Reading, celebrated during the week of November 14th. Since 2005, the CSF’s National Day of Reading celebrations have taken place in reading room schools across the country. This literacy event unites students, educators and parents to reinforce the importance of reading and discover the power and joy found between the pages of a book. For the 17th Annual National Day of Reading, we featured the children’s book, *Trombone Shorty*. This Caldecott Honor book and winner of the Coretta Scott King Award tells the real-life story of child prodigy and trombone aficionado, Troy Andrews. Children were excited to hear the story and elated when they recognized Mr. Andrews a few weeks later riding atop a float and performing in the 2022 Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade.



Mrs. Marlene Young, reading room sponsor at Wolfsville Elementary in Myersville, MD, reads *Trombone Shorty* to students.



Pittsburgh Dilworth K-5 Principal Qualisha Zyhier, with the assistance of a student, shares the featured story.

ELENI AND WOLFGANG GAGON’S LEGACY LIVES ON THREE THINK BIG READING ROOMS ADDED TO THE ROSTER



Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon immigrated to the United States and lived the American Dream. This loving couple were staunch supporters of education. They recognized the power of it and to honor their memory, three additional reading rooms have opened in their beloved, adopted city of San Diego. In November, reading rooms were established at Cabrillo Elementary and Chesterton Elementary. In January, we ushered in the new year with the creation of a Think Big Reading Room at Iftin Charter School. This brings the number of reading rooms sponsored by the Eleni and Wolfgang Gagon Trust to an astonishing 53. Because of their generosity, students in the “Birthplace of California” are developing the literacy skills needed to live their American Dream.

READING ROOM SPOTLIGHTS

We recently welcomed five schools into the Ben Carson/Think Big Reading Room family:

October 24
Rusk Elementary
Midland, TX

Sponsored by
Pevhouse Family
Foundation

October 24
St. Thomas More
Catholic Academy
Washington, DC

Sponsored by
Best Friends
Foundation

November 10
Cabrillo Elementary
San Diego, CA

Sponsored by
Eleni and Wolfgang
Gagon Trust

November 15
Chesterton Elementary
San Diego, CA

Sponsored by
Eleni and Wolfgang
Gagon Trust

January 6
Iftin Charter School
San Diego, CA

Sponsored by
Eleni and Wolfgang
Gagon Trust

ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC ACADEMY THINK BIG READING ROOM OPENING



The cloudy day in October didn't cause any rain on the parade of celebratory moments at the St. Thomas Moore Catholic Academy Reading Room Opening! A faith-driven school located in the Highland community of Washington D.C., St. Thomas More has been teaching D.C. youth to become lifelong scholars rooted in faith for more than 50 years!

The two ceremonies were held back-to-back in the cafe-torium, one for the younger set: pre-K through 3rd graders, and the second for the 4th through 8th graders!

From beginning to end, the excitement was contagious! Memorable musical moments from the students and sponsors, creative commentary by the co-hosts, and special remarks from Principal Gerald D. Smith, Jr. and Assistant Principal Deidre Shuler, as well as special guest Mrs. Candy Carson, co-founder of the Carson Scholars Fund, contributed to the success of the program. Special interviews of students by Dr. William Bennett, co-sponsor and former U.S. Secretary of Department of Education, topped off the ceremonies!



After the last musical number, Best Friends Foundation sponsors Dr. Bennett and Mrs. Elayne Bennett passed out books to each of the students.

Back to nature...

As you enter the room a special calm comes over you! The forest-green walls seem to embrace with a peacefulness that pervades each person! The quiet of the forest is only interrupted by inspired/imagined cricket sounds and the rustling of leaves. The campfire is a very safe one... a stuffed pillow near the corner

with a couple of helpful lanterns to guide your steps. The leaves of plants winding through the ceiling supports seem to reach down to the students as if to say, "Please reach up towards me! The sky isn't even a limit!!"

Several areas designed to draw the students in were strategically placed around the room: such as a low, plush sofa that cuddles as one settles in for a reading adventure, with several log pillows nearby to cushion any harsh thoughts! The wicker “table/ottomans” resemble friendly “dinosaur bugs,” with their curved black legs and “mouths” large enough for children to reach in and obtain more fun-filled books! In the koala corner the little critter is painted on the wall climbing a palm tree of stacked books, using knowledge to discover and reach new heights!

Special thanks to The Best Friends Foundation, Dr. William and Elayne Bennett, Diana Davis Spencer, Abby Moffat, Courtney Brown, Principal Smith, Ms. Shuler and Erica Jones.

Written by Candy Carson

[Read More Articles From Mrs. Candy Carson](#)



BECOME A VOLUNTEER!



CARSON SCHOLARS FUND
VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED

WAYS YOU CAN HELP:

JUDGING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS
IN-OFFICE MAILINGS
EVENT PREPARATION

REMOTE
volunteer
opportunities
as well as in
person!

INTERESTED IN HELPING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW?
Contact our scholarship director at rbrown@carsonscholars.org