



BEN CARSON *reading* **PROJECT**



What is the Carson Scholars Fund?



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 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.

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.

This 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.

Dr. Ben Carson attributes much of his success to the transformative power of reading. As a child, he faced significant academic challenges, and after receiving a disheartening report card, his mother, Sonya, who had only a third-grade education, was determined to help him improve. Driven by love and a desire for her son to succeed, she devised a plan to turn his academic struggles around. She required Ben and his brother, Curtis, to turn off the television and 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 reading, Ben became one of the brightest students.

Dear literacy comrades,

It was 25 years ago that my husband, Ben, and I launched the Ben Carson Reading Project. We observed that young people were not reading for pleasure, and worse yet, many lacked the desire to engage in this skill-building activity. We started the Ben Carson Reading Project to combat reading complacency.

Another trend we noticed, especially during the pandemic, is many school districts have taken a more computer-based approach to learning. While innovative, too much screen time can be detrimental to a developing mind. Children need diverse learning experiences, including the chance to let their minds wander and imaginations soar.

As we celebrate our silver jubilee, our hearts are overflowing with joy and hope. The literacy program we started in 2000 has exceeded our expectations. These calm, vibrant rooms whisk children away from mundane routines and transport them on magical literacy adventures. Switching students from classrooms and regular desks to cozy bean bag chairs helps them relax, boosting their mood and enthusiasm for reading. By changing children's mindsets, reading rooms are helping students build their reading skills to become competent, confident readers.

As we look to the future, we hope you will consider partnering with us to spread the magic of reading rooms all over the country. Together, we can support the readers of today as they develop into the leaders of tomorrow.

Sincerely,



Candy Carson
CSF Co-founder



Did you know?

Nearly every reading room coordinator involved with the program recommends that reading rooms should be installed in every school.*

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

While students can visit their 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 gives schools the opportunity to purchase high-interest books for children to enjoy in an environment that is designed for their comfort. In addition, students rarely have an opportunity to select their own reading materials in a classroom setting, but in a reading room the choice is theirs. When kids decide what they read, they read more.

"A reading room is more than a physical space; it's a gateway to a world of possibilities, shaping minds, fostering creativity, and leaving an indelible mark on the journey of lifelong learning."

—Media Specialist at Kimberly Elementary School

* 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.

The Ben Carson Reading Project nurtures the entire student body.

"I love the reading room, I wish I could stay in here all day."

—Student at Betty Wheeler Classical Junior Academy

Over
300+
Reading Rooms in
24
states



Over
150,000+
books purchased



139,000+
student
participants



Over
\$4 million
invested in
the program



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.

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

For a contribution of \$20,000, 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.

* Literacy Project, 2019

*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.*

"Reading should not be presented to children as a chore or a duty. It should be offered as a gift."

—Kate DiCamillo



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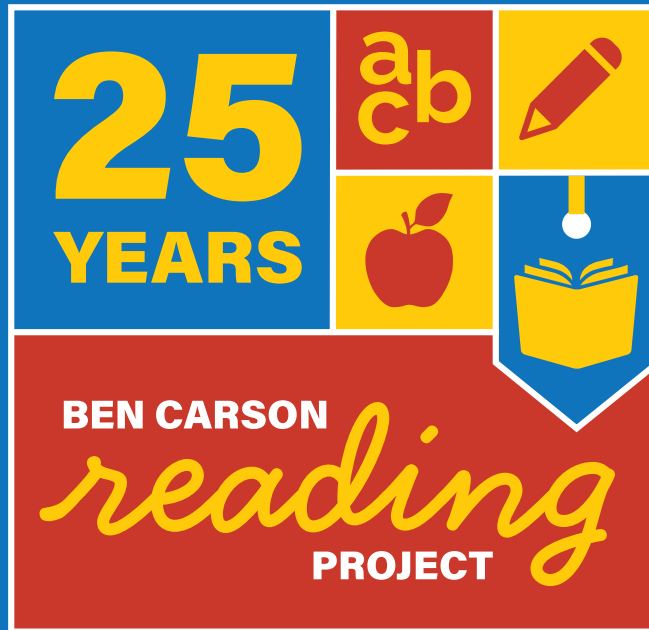
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