

Free books for kids and teachers: Delaware teams up with First Book

Educators and students are invited to pick out free books at kickoff event on December 17

Wilmington, DE – The State of Delaware is partnering with nonprofit social enterprise First Book to enrich the lives of thousands of children in need across the State by putting free brand-new books into their hands and classrooms.

The State is kicking off the partnership on Saturday, December 17 with two family events that will bring 40,000 books to Delaware's children, all for free. Educators who register for the event can pick out up to 50 books for each classroom, and each child who attends can pick out 10 free books—just in time for the holiday season. Books are available on a first-come.

“We could not be more excited about these events,” **said Governor Markell**. “We want Delaware to be the first state in the nation to ensure that every child in need has access to the books and resources required to be successful in school and in life, and we are delighted to be working with First Book to achieve that goal.”

First Book, which has operations in both the U.S. and Canada, works with formal and informal educators serving children in need ages 0-18 in a wide range of settings, from schools, classrooms, summer school and park and rec programs, to health clinics, homeless shelters, faith-based programs, libraries, museums, summer food sites and more. Since 1992, First Book has distributed more than 150 million books and developed a network of more than 275,000 teachers serving low-income communities.

“First Book is committed to finding innovative ways to address unmet needs and work toward educational equality,” **said President and CEO Kyle Zimmer**. “Delaware’s state officials have been enthusiastic partners from the start; it is really exciting for us to work with a group of dedicated professionals who share our goals.”

“The State’s disadvantaged children are too often unable to access the books and resources that are a critical part of learning,” **said State Librarian Annie Norman**. “This campaign is a proactive and creative solution for the children in that gap today.”

Lots of Free Books, Upstate and Down

Teachers and kids can load up on books at Brandywine High School in North Wilmington (9 am to 3 pm) and the North Georgetown Elementary School (9 am to noon) on Saturday, December 17.

To attend the event, teachers from Title I or Title-I eligible schools and others who serve children in need on a formal or informal basis should complete the free registration process with the First Book network at firstbook.org/firststate. There, they can also access the First Book Marketplace, which has thousands of books available at deep discounts and use the National Book Bank, which provides boxes of books for only the cost of shipping.

Families are also encouraged to visit either location and take home 10 books per child. Families do not have to register to attend. Several event sponsors, including Christiana Care Health System, Nemours, and other community organizations, will have representatives at one or both events to share helpful information about the many services available to Delaware families.

The State of Delaware and First Book would like to thank the following sponsors for supporting this event: M&T Bank; Delle

Donne & Associates; Christiana Care Health System; Nemours Alfred I. DuPont Hospital for Children; ShopRite; AFT Federation Union Local 762; AFT; Brandywine Education Association; Delaware Park; and United Way of Delaware.

Families and educators can learn more about the First Book/First State initiative and the December 17 event at firstbook.org/firststate. Volunteers can sign up at this link: <https://firstbook.wufoo.com/forms/volunteer-registration-first-book-kickoff-event/>

About First Book

First Book is a nonprofit social enterprise founded in 1992 that has distributed more than 150 million books and educational resources to programs and schools serving children from low-income families throughout the United States and Canada, which, with more than 275,000 members, is the largest and fastest growing network of educators exclusively serving kids in need. By making new, high-quality books and educational resources available on an ongoing basis, First Book is transforming the lives of children in need and elevating the quality of education. Eligible educators, librarians, program leaders, and others serving children in need can sign up at firstbook.org/register. For more information, please visit firstbook.org or follow the latest news on Facebook and Twitter.