

# About The Heart of America Foundation®

## About Us

The Heart of America Foundation®, a national nonprofit headquartered in Washington, D.C., uniquely promotes volunteer service and literacy. The organization inspires acts of service and a love of reading by building community and providing children in need with the tools to read, succeed and make a difference. Committed to education and volunteerism, The Heart of America Foundation® engages volunteers through putting books into the hands of children who need them the most. Through the Books From The Heart® and READesign® programs, The Heart of America Foundation® revitalizes school libraries and reading spaces in under-resourced communities into vital and vibrant centers of learning that become the heart of a school. Since 1997, The Heart of America Foundation® has provided children living in poverty with over two million library and take-home books. And, the organization has engaged volunteers in more than one million hours of service to communities nationwide.



## Our Impact

Since we were founded in 1997, The Heart of America Foundation® has...

- ♥ Touched the lives of over **1,050,000 people**.
- ♥ Helped volunteers serve more than **1,020,000 hours** in the community.
- ♥ Replenished, redecorated and revitalized **96 public elementary school libraries and reading spaces** in high need areas across the U.S. through our READesign® Library Makeover program.
- ♥ Provided children living in poverty with **two million books** – a value of nearly **\$11 million**.
- ♥ Introduced more than 500,000 students to community service.



## Recognition

- ★ Designated “One of the Best” in the 2009-10 *Catalogue for Philanthropy: Greater Washington*
- ★ 2009 Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Youth Partnership Award Finalist
- ★ Awarded the 2008 Target “Best of the Bullseye Award for Innovation”
- ★ Listed as #15 on the list of *Washington's Top 100 Benefits 2009* (BizBash magazine) for the Heart of America Foundation’s annual Sweet Charity fundraising event
- ★ Rated 4.89 on a 5.0 scale in 2009 by our Target partner - *Target team members give The Heart of America Foundation an overall score of 4.89 on their volunteer surveys. This survey rates the sense of personal accomplishment of the volunteer, degree of positive impact on the community, degree of pride working for a company that is committed to the community, organization of the activity, good use of volunteer time, and courtesy and knowledge of Heart of America staff.*



- ★ Rated 4.87 on a 5.0 scale in 2009 by our Capital One partner - *Capital One associates give The Heart of America Foundation an overall score of 4.87 on their volunteer surveys. This survey rates the projects based on the orientation, expectations, organization of the activity, courtesy and knowledge of Heart of America staff as well as the overall experience.*

## Why We Promote Literacy

- 61% of low-income families have no books at all in their homes.
- Children who have not developed basic literacy skills by the time they enter school are three to four times more likely to drop out in later years.
- Seven out of ten fourth graders cannot read at grade level.
- Low literacy can lead to crime, unemployment and poverty.
- Recent studies confirm that the availability of reading material is the strongest predictor of a child's ability to read and succeed academically.



## What Volunteers Are Saying About Our Work

- ★ "What I liked most was seeing the kids' faces when they received their books."
- ★ "The most organized event ever."
- ★ "I liked the entire experience – the excitement on the children's faces when they were read to."
- ★ "This experience made my day, week, month!"
- ★ "Well organized; high energy; great cause."
- ★ "I would volunteer again because I felt what we accomplished was something that will bring enjoyment to the children for many years to come."
- ★ "A HUGE congratulations to you and your team for successfully completing the 2009 Target Volunteers School Library Makeover season! Heartfelt thanks is truly not enough for what you have ALL contributed to the program and each individual project. [We] could not have wished for better partners. The HOA team amazes me on so many levels, from managing details regarding school selection to liaising with the school district, from assisting in management of each individual project team to time and time again contributing to the execution of wildly successful celebrations! Thank you for your hard work, patience, enthusiasm, talent and more. YOU INSPIRE US!!!" — *Target Community Relations*



## What Schools Are Saying About Our Work

- ★ “Never in my entire career in this wonderful field of education have I had the privilege of being part of something so grand.” — **Dr. Jessie Kerksey, Principal, John T. Hartman Elementary Magnet School**
- ★ “This event was a tremendous success due to your exceptional coordination, work of the volunteers, and generosity. Our students, faculty and staff will benefit immensely due to the wonderful efforts made by your team.” — **Dr. Beverly L. Hall, Superintendent, Atlanta Public Schools**
- ★ “The ‘new’ library is a bright, child-friendly, and engaging environment... The 2,000 books that were added to the library as part of the renovation and the books for each child’s home library will help our students to obtain information, learn, imagine, and dream. What a wonderful gift to give a child! The library renovation will also have an impact on the greater community.” — **Michael B. Cowan, Superintendent, Mesa Public Schools**
- ★ “We are most grateful to you for your support for W.W. Bushman. The time, energy and gifts of books and renovation have made a true difference in the lives of students and staff at the school.” — **Jane Didear, Partnership Coordinator, Dallas Independent School District**
- ★ “I have tried many times to phrase the words that express how the Library Makeover project has affected my school, but I become overwhelmed. The new Libraries are like gardens in the middle of a thorn patch, oases in the deserts. I still find myself sitting at my desk and just smiling for having my dream realized...Before this project I was a skeptic about corporate giving. I frequently shopped at Target where I saw signs promoting their generosity and I thought it was just propaganda. Was I wrong!! Target not only gives financial help, but they spend hours and hours personally volunteering in their community.” — **Media Specialist, Phillip D. Armour School, Chicago, Illinois**
- ★ “Unfortunately, many of our students do not have their own home libraries. Thanks to your generosity, we can now provide the students with books and technology to support their learning in a vibrant and engaging environment. Support from outstanding community partners such as...The Heart of America Foundation help us to give our students what they need in spite of budgetary challenges. I also was impressed with the sea of volunteers that came to build furniture, shelve books, plant flowers and even read to our students. This level of community service was truly inspiring...I applaud...The Heart of America Foundation for leading the way in this important effort.” — **Richard L. Miller, Ph.D., District Superintendent, Riverside Unified School District**
- ★ “The months we spent working with The Heart of America Foundation on this project were an absolute joy. Your staff was accessible and helped make the entire process easy for everyone involved. Principal Aline Phillips [shared], ‘This project is so much more than a new coat of paint. This space is the heart of our school.’” — **Jeffrey R. Spiegel, Superintendent, Ferguson-Florissant School District**
- ★ “All our students, staff and parents thank you for all the generous contributions of time, resources donations and support you have given our school district over the course of the several month project. From the selection and planning process to the prep work conducted over the summer months and finally to the finishing touches administered in time for the big unveiling, the effort was flawlessly implemented.” — **Jane A. Russo, Superintendent, Santa Ana Unified School District**