

# 2024 IMPACT REPORT

**FIRST BOOK CANADA** 

Eliminating Barriers. Inspiring Young Minds.





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# A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Systems change requires a shared movement.

By 2030, our goal is to reach at least half of Canadian children living at or below the poverty line, annually. We are working toward inspiring and educating at least 600,000 kids per year with the transformative power of reading. This work is possible with the help of many committed partners, in the manner of Sustainable Development Goal Four: to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. This means getting books to kids in need through every school, shelter, food bank, social service centre, clinic, after-school program, community centre, and library serving families in low-income communities. Together with our partners—book publishers, educators, community leaders, corporate funders, and individual donors—we are overcoming barriers and creating a shared movement.

We are proud to be named a Top 10 Impact Charity for the fourth year running. As a social enterprise, we use a market-based model to alter the current system that affords limited access to new, diverse books and supplementary resources to Canadian kids in need. We want every child in Canada to have a shelf full of books of their own at home. Childhood bookshelves are more than just furniture; the colours, stickers, and especially the books chosen to fill them, reflect every unique child and their interests and ambitions. We reached out to the Canadian public to reinforce this message in 2024 through our Bookshelves for Better campaign, which saw renowned book illustrators design bookshelves that were auctioned to donors and then placed in homes, filled with brand-new books.

## DESIGN

**BOOKSHELVES TO BE  
AUCTIONED OFF TO  
PROMOTE LITERACY**

Ten Canadian children's book illustrators have created custom bookshelves to promote literacy among those in need. Made in partnership with the non-profit First Book Canada, the pieces are now up for auction. "Childhood bookshelves are more than just furniture; their colours, stickers, and scribbles each tell a part of a child's story ... Every Canadian child should have access to this,"



said Heather Farquharson, executive director of First Book Canada, in a statement. The illustrators participating in the Bookshelves for Better campaign are Anna Bron, Wenting Li, Clayton Nguyen, Ruth Ohi, Angela Poon, Sid Sharp, Kevin Sylvester, Christine Wei, Azby Whitecalf (shown) and Justine Wong. Bidding is open at [shorturl.at/Q6ars](https://shorturl.at/Q6ars).  
*Postmedia News*

Image: Bookshelves for Better featured in the National Post daily newspaper.

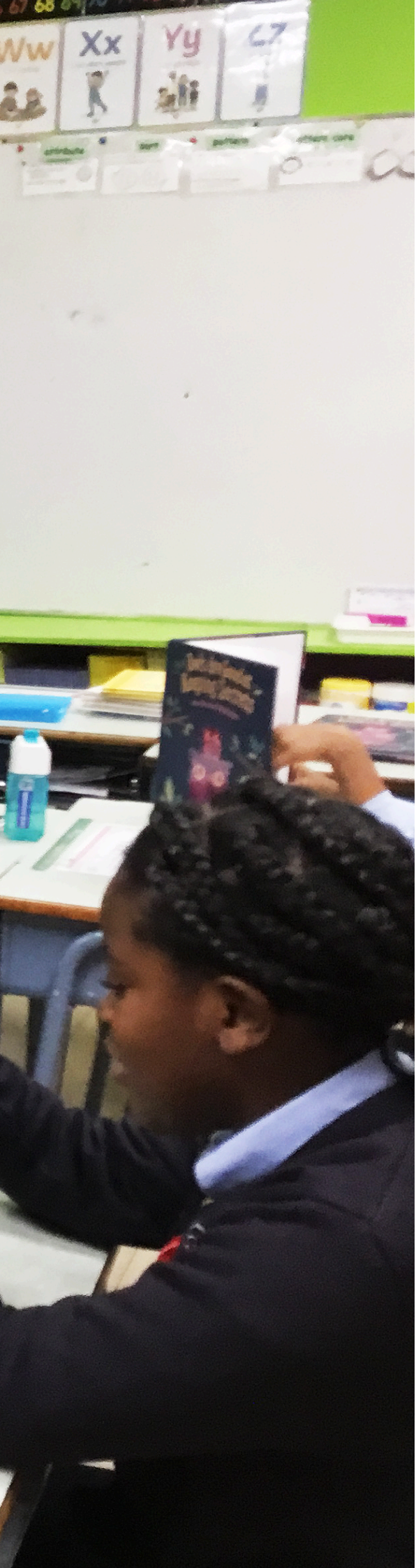
Educator network communication and content curation intentionally supports educators and non-profit program leaders' ability to curate resources for their current and emerging curriculum mandates. We continue to celebrate diversity through cultural amplification across all of our programs. Books and other educational resources are being made available in English, French, (Haitian) Créole (2025), Inuktitut, Anishinaabemowin/Eastern Ojibwe, Cree/Plains Cree and more. In addition to the general promotion of literacy, our 2024 programs and content emphasized Social and Emotional Learning (S.E.L.), Indigenous studies, and Jewish cultural studies and history, in partnership with the Toronto Holocaust Museum.

Our impact programs encourage a home-based literacy routine and reach kids right from birth, through our maternity hospital and community library partnership program, "A Reader is Born"; this support continues through K-6 literacy and middle-school diversity in S.T.E.A.M.; to empowering youth with educational tools, life skills, and changemaker inspiration right up to high-school graduation.

Our community investment partnerships continued to support our work in 2024, including: "Inuit Voices", a community distribution in Nunavut with Agnico Eagle; "Time for Change", along with Ashoka Canada supported by Audemars Piguet; BMO "Reads for the Future"; "Turn the Page" with the Jays Care Foundation; "Stories of Empowerment" along with Cisco Connected North and the RBC Foundation; and "Bridging the Gap" with the TD Ready Commitment; among many others. Together, we are transforming the lives of kids in need throughout Canada.

On behalf of the entire First Book Canada team, thank you, merci, miigwetch,

Heather Farquharson, Executive Director



## OUR MISSION

First Book Canada is working to ensure that kids in need and their educators have as much opportunity as possible to access educational resources.

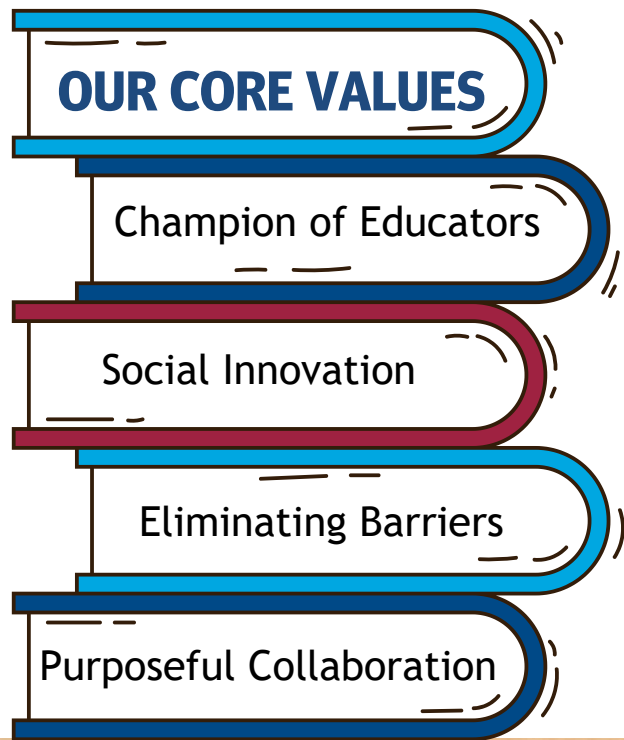
A child's "first book" is not necessarily their first reading experience—it is that first book that they connect with, which sets them on a lifelong path of learning and inspiration. A book can unlock a child's own story.

Our national network of educators and community leaders have unparalleled insights into what kids need most. Through their experiences, they help shape our resources, partnerships, and priorities. First Book Canada strives to facilitate best practices in expanding access to affordable books and supplemental resources, to better serve Canadian communities. We elevate and amplify the voices of authors and illustrators who inspire and empower through storytelling.

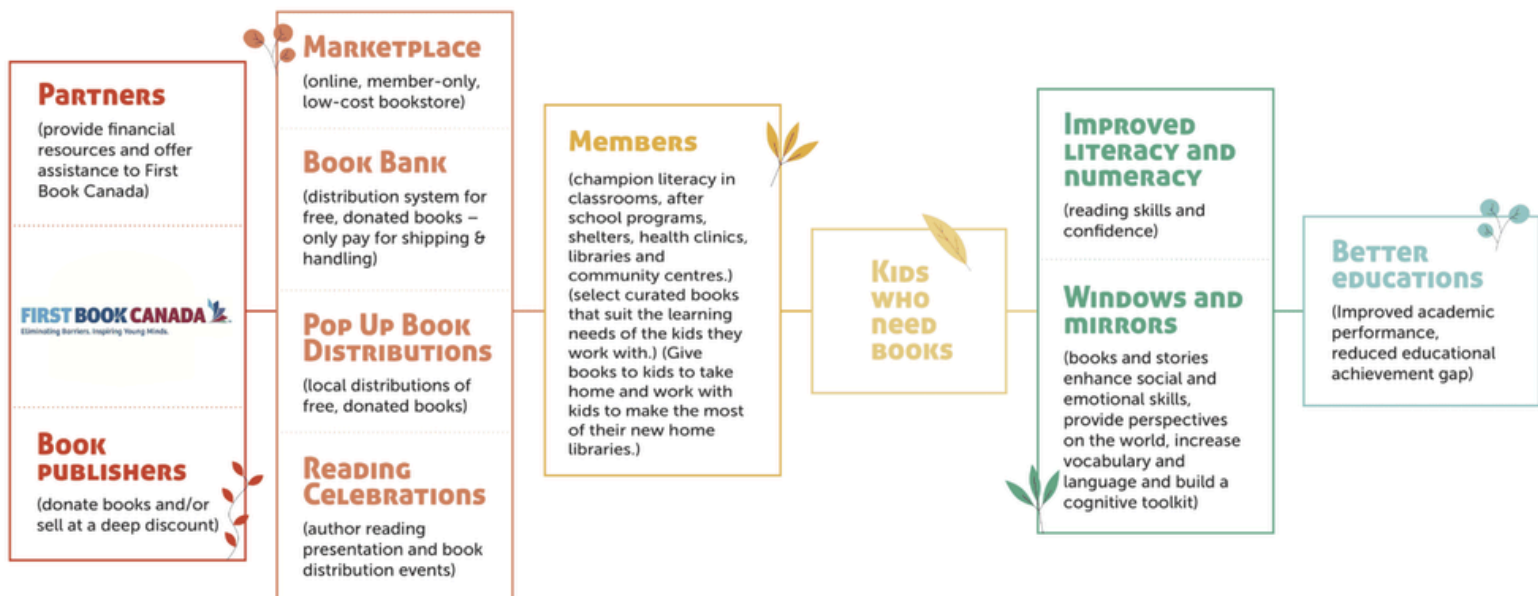
### Designing sustainable, system-changing strategies that drive measurable results

First Book Canada provides low-cost, high-quality new books and supplemental resources. By partnering with publishers, First Book Canada increases access to diverse/relevant content using multiple pathways:

- **First Book Canada Marketplace™:** a non-profit eCommerce site, delivering a wide range of diverse books & resources, offered at the lowest costs possible, or for free through our **Book Bank**.
- **First Book Canada Accelerator:** translating expertise into actionable educational strategies to support learning for kids in need.
- **Pop-Up Community Distributions:** local events putting free books in the hands of educators, including our **Book-Bag-Build Events**.
- **Reading Celebrations and Challenges:** bringing together children, authors and illustrators.



## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



# LEADERSHIP

## Board of Directors

### Tanis Feasby

Senior Vice-President, Corporate Communications, RBC

### Chairperson

### Rumeet Billan Ph.D

CEO, Women of Influence+

### Luke Gee

Vice President, Everyday Banking Product, TD Bank Group

### Ryan Peterson

Chartered Professional Accountant, RKP

### Julie Lavoie

Partner, Co-Leader Business Lines, Levio Business + Technology

### Vice-Chairperson

### Alvaro Lozada Cauduro

Vice President and General Manager, Global Fraud Operations - Amex Bank of Canada

### Adam Mamdani

VP Proprietary Distribution, RBC Insurance

### Kyle Zimmer

Founder & CEO, First Book USA

## Staff

### Heather Farquharson

Executive Director

### Gurdeep Dhaliwal

Strategic Alliances Manager

### Jenny Pullon

Non-Profit Partner and Communications Manager

### Amy Smithers

Program Manager

### Julie Mai

E-Commerce & Data Manager

### Lindsay Yates

Program Operations & Events Coordinator

## First Book Canada Named to 2024 Top Impact Charities Lists by Charity Intelligence Canada

For the fourth year in a row, First Book Canada was recognized by [Charity Intelligence Canada](#) as one of the country's most impactful organizations. This year First Book Canada was named to three Charity Intelligence Canada special recognition lists: [Top 10 Impact Charities of 2024](#), [Top 10 Canadian Impact Charities of 2024](#), and [Top 10 Impact Youth Charities of 2024](#). We are proud to be honoured with this distinction for the work we do to support kids in need.

CHARITY INTELLIGENCE 2024

**TOP 10  
IMPACT CHARITIES**

CHARITY INTELLIGENCE 2024

**TOP 10 CANADIAN  
IMPACT CHARITIES**

CHARITY INTELLIGENCE 2024

**TOP 10 IMPACT:  
YOUTH CHARITIES**

## CORPORATE PARTNERS

We are thankful for the support of our corporate funding partners, who have made it possible to secure and distribute thousands of brand-new books to children from coast to coast to coast. Thanks to their contributions, we have been able to continue existing programs and start amazing new ones, impacting children from birth to age 18, and supporting the essential work of our network of educators. Providing access to high-quality, diverse books and resources is critical to a child’s social and emotional development, literacy and numeracy skills, and provides the building blocks to achieve academic success in school and beyond. Our partners’ commitment and investment in First Book Canada is critical in helping to make a difference in the lives of children in high-needs Canadian communities.

Corporate employee volunteers play an important role in many of the events hosted at high-needs schools and community programs supported by our corporate partners. We are grateful for their commitment in giving back to their community and the time spent in sharing the joy of reading and books with kids.

### ALL CORPORATE PARTNERS

Agnico Eagle • Audemars Piguet • Amazon Gives • Bank of Montreal • Bison Transport • Build-A-Bear Foundation • CIBC Children’s Foundation • DREAM • Dryden Fibre Canada • Gildan • Kiewit Development Company • KPMG Foundation • LEGO Group • Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan • Raptors905 • RBC Foundation • Tangerine Bank • Tata Sons • TD Ready Commitment • Victoria Villages Foundation



## NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

At First Book Canada, we have the privilege of welcoming not only a network of educators and youth leaders working in schools across the country, but also a diverse group of non-profit organizations, with inspiring and impactful literacy programs. With the shared goal of reaching Canadian kids in need, we work together to bring the joy and importance of book ownership to those who need it most. We are excited to share the incredible work our partners are doing, and are proud to play a role in supporting their programs.



15

Locations Impacted  
Nationwide



2,480

Brand-New  
Books Provided



A ribbon cutting ceremony for a new Start2Finish vending machine.  
Photo courtesy of Start2Finish

### Who is Start2Finish?

Start2Finish is a Canadian charity dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty by providing educational support to at-risk children. Their mission is to empower kids by nurturing mental, physical, and social health, helping them become role models for change in their communities.

### How We Partner

First Book Canada supplies children's books focused on Indigenous, Canadian, and social-emotional themes for Start2Finish's **Book Vending Machine Project** in schools and community centres. This helps ensure Indigenous children and those in need have access to empowering and culturally relevant literature.

### Who is Canadian Children's Book Centre?

The Canadian Children's Book Centre (CCBC) has been a key partner of First Book Canada since 2018. As a national organization dedicated to promoting Canadian children's literature, the CCBC connects young readers with Canadian authors and illustrators through their annual Canadian Children's Book Week (CCBW). This week-long event, held every April, features authors, illustrators, and storytellers who travel across the country to engage with children and teens, inspiring a lifelong love of reading.



The Canadian Children's Book Centre

### How We Partner



200

Brand-New  
Books Provided



7

Locations Impacted  
Nationwide

First Book Canada supports CCBC's **Canadian Children's Book Week** by providing books for participating kids. In 2024, we supplied *Life in Two Worlds: A Coach's Journey from the Reserve to the NHL and Back* by Ted Nolan, who presented to schools to inspire young readers with his story.



5,805  
Brand-New  
Books Provided



Canadian  
Children's  
Literacy  
Foundation    Fondation pour  
l'alphabétisation  
des enfants  
canadiens



64  
Locations Impacted  
Nationwide

### Who is the Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation?

The Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation (CCLF) is a national charity dedicated exclusively to children's early literacy. They raise awareness about the importance of early literacy, support and develop literacy initiatives, champion literacy partners, and empower families and communities to build strong literacy skills from the start.

### How We Partner

First Book Canada supports CCLF by supplying books for their **Early Words Clinic** program several times throughout the year. We work closely with publishers to deliver high-quality, age-appropriate titles that help foster early literacy development among young children.

## FIRST BOOK CANADA'S NON-PROFIT PARTNER GROWTH

Total NPP Network Members

2023

Goal: 6,600

Actual: **6,637**

2024

Goal: 6,800

Actual: **6,822**

2025 Goal: 7,000

### ALL NON PROFIT PARTNERS

Book Clubs for Inmates • The Canadian Children's Book Centre • Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation • ChIRP • Connected North • Dartmouth Learning Network • Downie & Wenjack Fund • Further Education Society • Hamilton Public Library • Human Resources and Skills Development Canada • Jays Care Foundation • Let's Talk Science • minibilioplus • Moisson Montréal • NeighbourLink • Ontario Library Association • Pi Beta Phi • Service Canada • Start2Finish • Toronto Community Housing • Toronto Public Library • Trucks for Change • United for Literacy



- **8,858 new books** provided to book clubs
- **45 facilities**
- **Nationwide Programming**



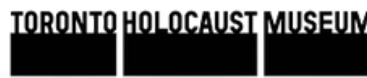
- **200 new books** provided for community mentoring programs
- **Ontario Based Programming**



- **2,200 new books** provided for literacy events
- **British Columbia Based Programming**



- **1,141 new books** provided, including **403** French titles
- **25 schools** impacted
- **Nationwide Programming**



- **220 new books** provided for educational events
- **Ontario Based Programming**



- **225 new books** provided to community programs
- **Ontario Based Programming**



- **4,350 new books** provided for library programs
- **Ontario Based Programming**



- **1,200 new books** provided for community literacy events
- **Ontario Based Programming**



- **2,000 new books** provided for Indigenous summer camp programs
- **Nationwide Programming**

**The impact First Book Canada has had on the young people in our communities has been incredible, and we want to extend our sincere appreciation for all that First Book Canada has done to support families in our Toronto Community Housing communities.**

- Levi W, Toronto Community Housing Supervisor | Toronto, ON

## PUBLISHING PARTNERS

In our fifteen years serving kids in need, not one of our programs would have been possible without the generous, longstanding partnerships we enjoy with our many Canadian book publishers. Providing both donated titles and essential purchasing discounts that allow us to pass savings forward to our members through the First Book Canada Marketplace™, our publishing partners get brand-new books for all ages and interests into the hands of the children who need them most. We're proud to share some of the highlights of our publisher donations this year below.

**249,151 total books were donated by our publishing partners in 2024; that is a total market value of over \$3.9 million!**

A whopping 184,000 books were donated by [Penguin Random House Canada](#)

Personal book donations were made directly by authors [Tina Powell](#), [Deborah Kerbel](#), and [Veronika Martenova Charles](#)

We received generous donations from small, independent publishers such as [Achieve Publishing](#), [Enchanted Lion Press](#), [Peanut Butter Press](#), [Rebel Mountain Press](#), [Red Comet Press](#), and [Pajama Press](#)

We received major donations from [Owl Kids](#), [Firefly Books](#), [Scholastic Canada](#) and [HarperCollins Canada](#), which allowed us to give away FREE books at pop-up events across the country



Penguin  
Random House  
Canada

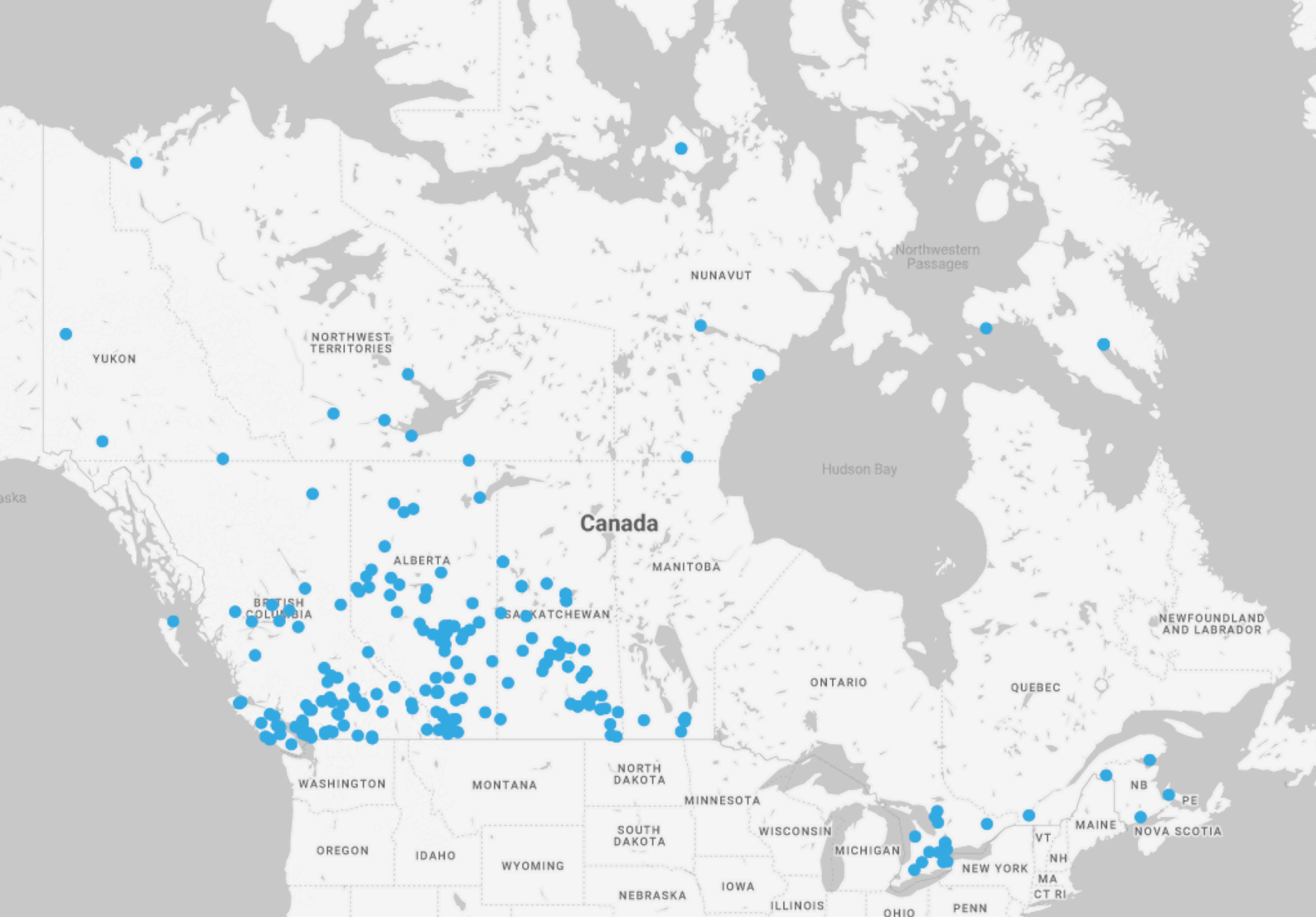


RAINCOAST BOOKS



### ALL PUBLISHING PARTNERS

Achieve Publishing • Annick Press • Bayard Canada • Canadian Children's Book Centre • Capstone • Common Deer Press • Cormorant Books • Disney Publishing Worldwide • DK • Douglas & McIntyre • Dundurn • ECW Press • Enchanted Lion Press • Fitzhenry & Whiteside • Firefly Books • Freehand Books • Friesens • Goose Lane • Greystone Books • Greenwood • Hachette Book Group • Harbour Publishing • Harlequin • HarperCollins Canada • Heritage • HighWater Press • House of Anansi Press • Ingram Publisher Services • Inhabit Media • Kids Can Press • LEGO Group • Les 400 Coups • Les Éditions Héritage Inc • Lorimer • Macmillan Publishers • Nimbus Publishing • Orca Book Publishers • Owl Kids • Page Two Books • Pajama Press • Peanut Butter Press • Penguin Random House Canada • Portage & Main Press • Publishers Group Canada • Québec Amérique • Raincoast Books • Rebel Mountain Press • Red Comet Press • Rocky Mountain Books • Ronsdale • Scholastic • Second Story Press • Simon & Schuster Canada • Theytus Books • Tradewind Books • Tundra



Map: Our network of educators & community leaders located throughout Canada

## 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

**350K+**

books distributed

**10M+**

books and resources distributed since First Book Canada's founding

**20K**

registered network members

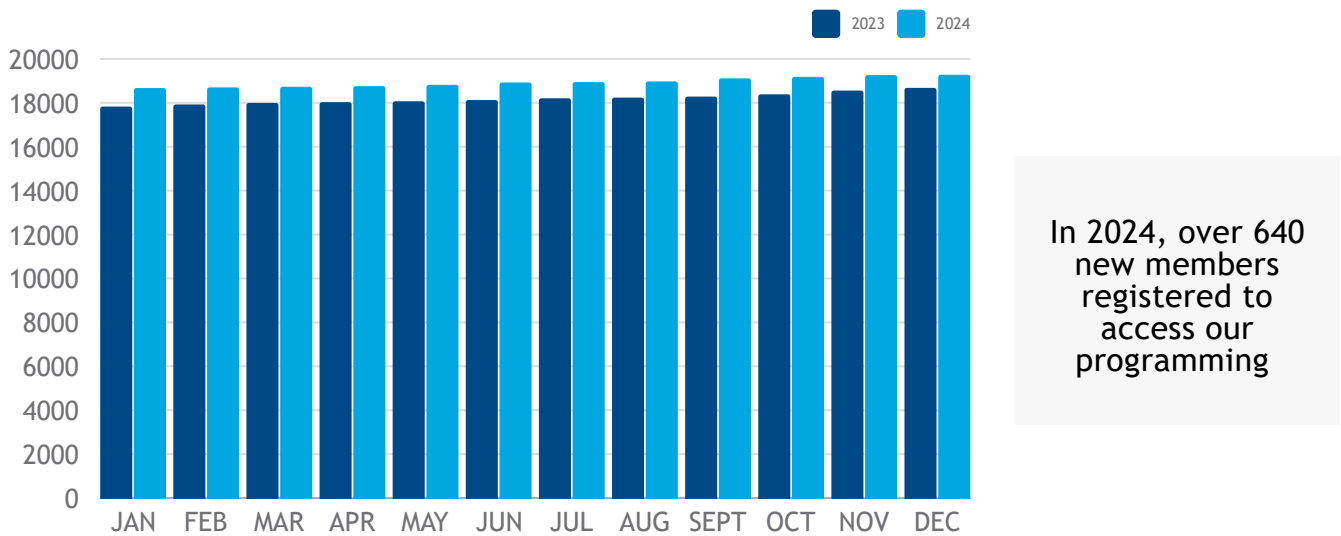
**1,800+**

2024 donors

## Champion Collaborators: The First Book Canada Network™ continues to expand

The First Book Canada Network™ is a community approaching 20,000 members, consisting of educators and professionals who serve children in under-resourced communities. In 2024, First Book Canada continued to serve more than 350,000 children annually, 70% of whom identify as BIPOC.

As illustrated below, First Book Canada’s rapid growth continued in 2024.



### Delivering the essential resources that drive measurable change

- First Book Canada provides low-cost, high-quality new books and supplemental resources. By partnering with publishers, First Book Canada increases access to diverse/relevant content and provides a trusted, cost-effective channel to reach our network.
- Educators report that First Book Canada offers them crucial help by providing books that support social and emotional learning, encourage reading at home, and assist English language learners.

**368,000+**

books and resources were distributed to kids in need in 2024



First Book Canada is grateful for the trust and generosity that donors and partners have consistently provided in support of kids in need.

## Building a Brighter, More Literate Future

Together, the dedication to bridging the literacy gap for underprivileged children across Canada has been nothing short of extraordinary.

- **Breaking new records with individual giving.** In 2024, First Book Canada received an approximate **155% increase in donations** vs. 2023.
- **Fostering new opportunities for corporate engagement.** First Book Canada provided new support models for corporate partners to engage directly with our programming.

## 2024 DONATIONS IN REVIEW

**\$767K+**

donations received in 2024

**10M**

books and resources  
distributed since First Book  
Canada's founding

**254K+**

books distributed  
directly through  
corporate donor  
support

## Bookshelves for Better



First Book Canada is proud to work together with [Craft Public Relations](#) on an annual basis. Craft PR is actively committed to giving back in areas where they work, and to fostering ongoing allyship to build a more equitable and inclusive industry.

The Bookshelves for Better initiative invited Canadian children’s book illustrators to create custom bookshelves for kids. Artists donated their time and talents to paint their own unique designs on the shelves, perfect for any reading nook. The one-of-a-kind creations were then auctioned off to support efforts that break down literacy barriers for children in need, with all proceeds donated to expand First Book Canada’s programming nationwide.

Each bookshelf is unique—just like every child! Every child deserves to experience their first book in a positive, individualized, and creative way, and each bookshelf with their first collection of books reflects this.

The auction took place in October 2024, and the highest bidder on each shelf had the opportunity to keep their bookshelf to inspire others, or choose to donate it to a local school, where a student would have the chance to win it and take it home, full of brand-new books. Five shelves were donated to local children after the auction took place, but no matter where they ended up, these bookshelves represent more than just art; they symbolize the transformative power of books and reading.

None of this would have been possible without our Champion Collaborators—our First Book Canada Network™!

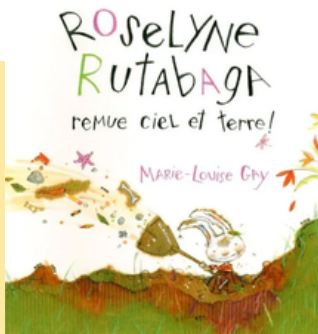
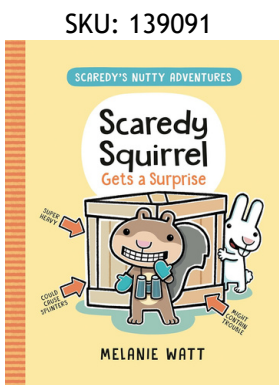
**The Bookshelves for Better auction raised national awareness of our work, helping us to exceed our 2024 fundraising goal!**

# FIRST BOOK CANADA MARKETPLACE™: EDUCATOR-DRIVEN RESOURCES

The First Book Canada Marketplace™ provides the First Book Canada Network™ with 24-hour, year-round access to an award-winning selection of affordable new books and educational resources curated for our members.

In 2024, nearly 104K books and resources were ordered and shipped from First Book Canada's Marketplace™ and Book Bank in total. Book selections are curated by First Book Canada, and include an ongoing focus on Canadian stories and Indigenous-authored titles.

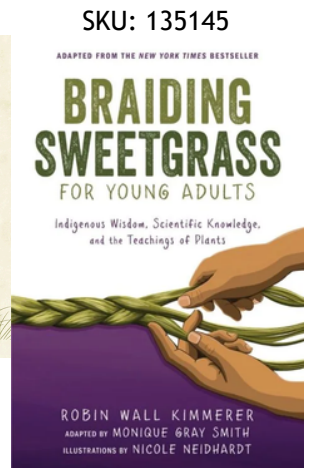
## Top 5 Bestsellers on Our Marketplace in 2024:



SKU: 120834



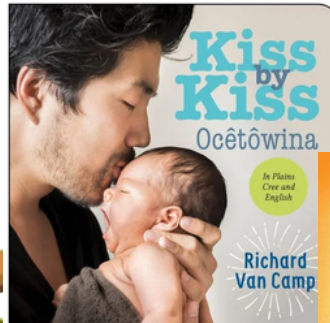
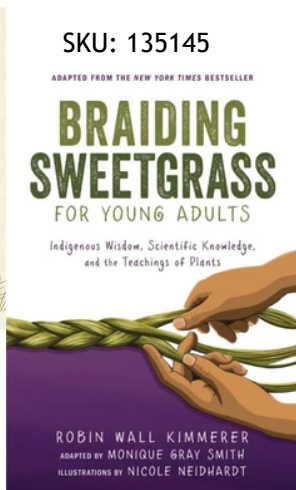
SKU: 135160



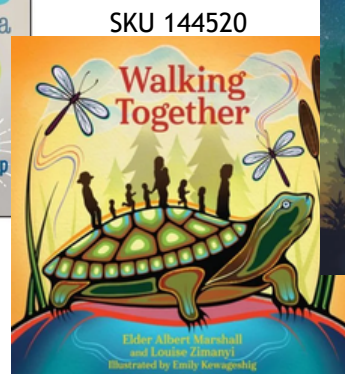
## Top 5 Bestsellers in the Indigenous Characters & Cultures Category:



SKU: 135160



SKU 128296



SKU 133774

## First Book Canada’s Marketplace expands its offerings

In 2024, Indigenous titles listed on the Marketplace™ had **over a 34% average increase** in sales over the course of the year.

In terms of culturally-diverse titles, our members special **ordered over 9,000 Indigenous books and over 400 French-language books** in 2024.

### S.T.E.A.M. titles that inspire from the First Book Canada Marketplace™!

At First Book Canada we recognize the critical need for all learners to explore the exciting and ever-changing S.T.E.A.M. fields.

- **Continuous learning for curious minds...** First Book Canada’s S.T.E.A.M. category on our Marketplace™ continues to thrive and grow, with new titles available in 2024!





## BRIDGING THE GAP

The Multilateral Early Learning Framework, first announced in 2017 by the Canadian government, identifies national goals for the field of early learning and child care with the stressed importance of increasing “quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity” through further investments in the field. The Multilateral Early Learning Framework puts forth a strong vision for quality early learning by recognizing the need for “rich early experiences and environments, and views children as capable, competent, learners who are full of potential.” Despite a consensus that early childhood is a critical period for laying the foundation for successful child development, there remain large gaps between disadvantaged and more advantaged children in socioemotional and academic development. With structural inequalities along socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic lines, First Book Canada supports early intervention to improve literacy and numeracy rates among children in kindergarten to grade six, along with our partners at TD Bank Group and the TD Ready Commitment.

[Presented by TD: Bridging the Gap | First Book Canada](#)

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## READS FOR THE FUTURE

First Book Canada and Bank of Montreal have joined forces to champion strong communities and the organizations supporting them, by fostering an inclusive society. The Reads for the Future program includes the distribution of over 19,000 brand-new, culturally relevant books to communities across the country. In 2024, the program launched and invited members of the First Book Canada Network™ to apply for up to \$500 worth of brand-new diverse books. Anyone working in a school or representing a program serving at least 7 out of 10 participating children from a low-income family was eligible to apply.

[Presented by Bank of Montreal: Reads for the Future | First Book Canada](#)

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# Empowering Educators with Our New S.T.E.M. Diversity Calendar - A First Book Canada Accelerator

The [2024-2025 Celebrating Diversity & Inclusion in S.T.E.M. Calendar](#) is a free tool designed to help educators bring amazing moments of innovation to life, and to showcase the incredible contributions of diverse S.T.E.M. pioneers. The calendar can be adapted for a variety of grade levels, and supports teachers all year round as it spans from August 2024 to July 2025.

First Book Canada has made the Educator Calendar an annual featured resource for educators and children in need.

In 2024, more than 110 educators downloaded and used the calendar to share historical events and innovations with their students, using it as a springboard to generate discussion and discovery.



**JULY**

It's clear that Canada has a lot to celebrate. The International Day of Friendship reminds us that developing friendships with people from other cultures and backgrounds can build bridges between communities.

**TRY THIS!**

- For Canada Day, take a journey coast-to-coast-to-coast through an unforgettable list of books by authors with ties to each province and territory.
- Help build bridges in your own community with books about Immigrant & Refugee Experiences.

Children who don't read over the summer lose at least two months of reading development. Support summer reading through reading challenges, library and park programs, and books!

**TRY THIS!**

- Explore First Book Canada's Summer Reading section for titles for all ages.
- Provide stories in popular formats, such as Graphic Novels & Comics.

| Sunday                                     | Monday | Tuesday                       | Wednesday                             | Thursday           | Friday                                  | Saturday               |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------|
|                                            |        | 1<br>Canada Day               | 2                                     | 3                  | 4                                       | 5                      |
| 6<br>National Minority Mental Health Month | 7      | 8<br>Doris Lessing's Birthday | 9                                     | 10<br>Math 3.0 Day | 11<br>Nelson Mandela (1918 - 2013)      | 12                     |
| 13                                         | 14     | 15                            | 16<br>Quilts Remembrance Day          | 17                 | 18                                      | 19                     |
| 20                                         | 21     | 22                            | 23                                    | 24                 | 25<br>National Disability Inclusion Day | 26                     |
| 27                                         | 28     | 29                            | 30<br>International Day of Friendship | 31                 |                                         | Disability Pride Month |

\*Note: National holidays follow the lower calendar and therefore do not fall on the same dates each year. \*\*Canada's oldest opera was born on this day in 1858. The national film festival began in 1988.

**MAY**

May, a month heralded by the vibrant bloom of spring, holds significance in celebrating our planet's biodiversity and raising awareness about endangered species. Moreover, it marks a poignant moment with National Child and Youth Mental Health Day, highlighting the importance of mental well-being in our younger generations.

**TRY THIS!**

- Explore our free First Book Canada Accelerator resources for tools and resources to support you throughout the year.
- Prepare for National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day by discovering engaging mindfulness books tailored for young readers, designed to nurture calm and self-awareness through accessible stories and exercises.
- Highlight the amazing diversity of our planet's wildlife by exploring the free *Build the Change: Biodiversity and Climate Change Course Pack* with 10 lesson plans.

| Sunday                           | Monday                              | Tuesday                       | Wednesday                                        | Thursday                                 | Friday                            | Saturday                      |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                  |                                     |                               |                                                  | 1<br>School Principals' Day              | 2<br>First Book Bank Day          | 3                             |
| 4<br>Asian Heritage Month        | 5<br>Canadian Jewish Heritage Month | 6<br>National Inventors Month | 7<br>National Child and Youth Mental Health Day  | 8                                        | 9                                 | 10                            |
| 11<br>May the Fourth Be with You | 12<br>Crisis de Morte               | 13                            | 14<br>National Literacy Day                      | 15<br>Global Accessibility Awareness Day | 16<br>Enslavement Remembrance Day | 17                            |
| 18<br>Victoria Day               | 19<br>World Book Day                | 20                            | 21<br>International Day for Biological Diversity | 22<br>National Maritime Day              | 23                                | 24                            |
| 25                               | 26                                  | 27                            | 28                                               | 29                                       | 30                                | 31<br>National Creativity Day |

\*Note: National holidays follow the lower calendar and therefore do not fall on the same dates each year.

**JUNE**

June's placement at the end of the school year allows for both commemoration of diversity and reflection on educational achievements, making June a time of festivity and transition in Canada.

**TRY THIS!**

- Celebrate Canada's multiculturalism by exploring *The Stories for All Project*, a rich selection of diverse stories reflecting the vibrant tapestry of cultures that make up Canada.
- Explore LGBTQIA+ books to embrace concepts of acceptance, truth, love and identity through thoughtful storytelling. They offer readers a chance to connect deeply and cultivate empathy.

In 2024, the UN designated June 11 as International Day of Play. Every child can reach their full potential with the time, space, and access to play.

**TRY THIS!**

- Shop the *Activities* section of the *Motivations* for games and activities that encourage learning through play.
- Explore free *Build the Change: "Learning through play"* designed to engage students around environmental issues.

| Sunday                          | Monday                        | Tuesday                         | Wednesday                             | Thursday                         | Friday                  | Saturday                              |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1                               | 2                             | 3                               | 4                                     | 5                                | 6                       | 7                                     |
| 8<br>World Oceans Day           | 9                             | 10<br>International Day of Play | 11<br>Day of Anzac (1915 - 2024)      | 12<br>Edith Piaf (1915 - 1963)   | 13                      | 14                                    |
| 15                              | 16                            | 17                              | 18                                    | 19                               | 20<br>World Refugee Day | 21<br>National Indigenous Peoples Day |
| 22<br>International Women's Day | 23<br>Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day | 24                              | 25<br>National New Year (1988 - 2024) | 26<br>Canada's Multicultural Day | 27                      | 28<br>National Indigenous Peoples Day |
| 29                              | 30                            |                                 |                                       |                                  |                         |                                       |

\*Note: National holidays follow the lower calendar and therefore do not fall on the same dates each year.

## BUILD THE CHANGE WITH THE LEGO GROUP

In 2021, research and educator feedback guided the creation of a sustainability-focused learning experience that was engaging for students, effective for teachers, and allowed educators to easily integrate the **Learning Through Play STEM** sessions into their existing curriculum.

### Meeting educators where they are.

600+ educators downloaded a LEGO Group Course Pack from the First Book Canada Marketplace™.

### Building future leaders.

10,000+ boxes of refurbished and repackaged LEGO building bricks were provided to educators, giving children a chance to build and play with this high-quality educational toy.

The LEGO Group provided First Book Canada educators with free access to the Build the Change classroom resources through the [Playful Schools Challenge Course Pack](#) and the [Designing Places for People Course Pack](#), among other Course Packs.

The Course Packs include customizable lesson plans and slide presentations, enabling educators to help students learn about animals, habitats, and the ways climate change impacts their communities.



LEGO, the LEGO logo, the Minifigure and the Brick and Knob configuration are trademarks and copyrights of the LEGO Group. ©2023 The LEGO Group. All rights reserved.

**"In our community, these resources have been transformative. Many families struggle to provide access to educational materials, and the distribution event has leveled the playing field.**

**We're now able to promote a culture of learning, and support children's educational journeys in ways that were not possible before.**

**The impact goes beyond just reading; it cultivates a sense of community where knowledge sharing and collaboration thrive."**

- Jacqueline T. | Regina, SK



# POP-UP BOOK DISTRIBUTIONS: MEET THE COMMUNITY

Bringing the network together: Six in-person Pop-Up Events were held across Canada, distributing 212K+ books to over 770 First Book Canada members and more than 70,000 kids in need



## Winnipeg Book Distribution: June 4-6, 2024

Stats of Success:

30,206 books distributed

980 LEGO® boxes distributed

101 attendees

10,395 kids impacted with new books

As part of First Book Canada's [Theory of Change](#), community Pop-Up Book Distributions were organized to provide hundreds of thousands of high-quality, brand-new books to Canadian kids in need.

The success of our distributions depends on the generous help of a select number of collaborators: [Jays Care Foundation](#), [CHED Santos Anonymous](#), [Book Depot](#), and [Moisson Montreal](#). Additional support and funding was provided by Bank of Montreal, TD, Rogers, the LEGO Group, Bison Transport and our many publishing partners.



## Edmonton Book Distribution: September 12-13, 2024

Stats of Success:

16,058 books distributed

1,680 LEGO® boxes distributed

61 attendees

5,913 kids impacted with new books

## Niagara Book Distribution: November 14-15, 2024

Stats of Success:

40,072 books distributed

1,680 LEGO® boxes distributed

260 attendees

13,917 kids impacted with new books



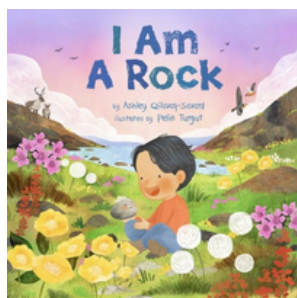
# Agnico Eagle | September 14th, 2024

Community book distribution and author presentation in Baker Lake, Nunavut

First Book Canada provided 2,528 brand-new books and 140 LEGO® kits for children and youth at the local Festival by the Lake celebration. We filled the shelves of the new community daycare, elementary school and high-school.

260 copies each of I Am A Rock and It's Time for Bed were shipped to and distributed in Baker Lake, Nunavut.

Iqaluit-based authors Ceporah Mearns and Jeremy Debicki attended the Festival by the Lake event, read to children, and led fun activities for children in attendance.



## Jays Care Foundation: Turn the Page Pop-Up Events

**Regina Turn the Page Book Distribution:  
September 26-27, 2024**

Stats of Success:

60,212 books distributed

1,400 LEGO® boxes distributed

157 attendees

20,537 kids impacted with new books

**Calgary Turn the Page Book Distribution:  
June 18-21, 2024**

Stats of Success:

60,209 books distributed

1,400 LEGO® boxes distributed

193 attendees

20,536 kids impacted with new books



# BOOK-BAG-BUILDS

## KPMG Foundation - Toronto & Hamilton (November 2024)

For each Book-Bag-Build in Toronto and Hamilton, KPMG employee volunteers put together book bags filled with five brand-new books each (750 total books per location), and a handwritten note of encouragement.

Volunteers in Toronto distributed the book bags to 150 Grade 1-3 students at Lord Dufferin Junior and Senior Public School. Volunteers in Hamilton distributed the book bags to 150 Grade 1-5 students at W. H. Ballard Elementary School.



## Victoria Villages Foundation (December 2024)

In December 2024, the Victoria Village Group partnered with First Book Canada on a Book-Bag-Build. 1,000 bags were assembled, each containing five books and bookplates, a handwritten note, and a LEGO® kit. The bags were then distributed to several Victoria Village Group Childcare Centres in Ontario for kids to take home just in time for the holidays.



## Amazon Gives September 2024

Amazon Gives partnered with First Book Canada for their quarterly Education Campaign to support children's literacy across the country through Book-Bag-Build events. Amazon volunteers filled book bags with five brand-new, high-quality books each for children in Grades 1-4. These book bags were distributed to 21 schools and community organizations, helping students build their own home libraries and fostering a love of reading.

### In The Bags

- 5 brand-new books
- Notecards with words of encouragement written by Amazon volunteers
- Book plate name stickers for each book



### The Impact

21

Amazon warehouse locations

7,350

Books provided

1,470

Canadian kids impacted

5

Provinces reached

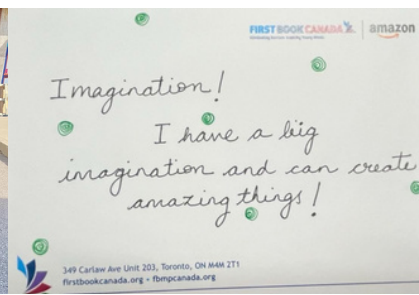
**Owning books has a transformative influence on students' reading habits and confidence. Having their own books at home encourages regular reading, fosters a sense of pride in their personal library, and supports the development of critical literacy skills. This opportunity not only provided our students with high-quality reading materials but also opened the door to a lifelong love of reading, which will positively impact their academic success and personal growth.**

Education Leader Recipient of Amazon Gives Book Bags - Aldergrove, BC

**These are really mine to keep? I'm so lucky to get books, I'm going to read them every night before bed.**

Student Recipient of Amazon Gives Book Bags - Ajax, ON

Amazon Whitby, ON Gives back to the Ignite Durham Learning Foundation in Whitby, ON



Discovering the magic of reading with local authors and illustrators: First Book Canada hosted 11 Reading Celebrations, inviting authors and illustrators to present to over 900 students in-person or virtually.



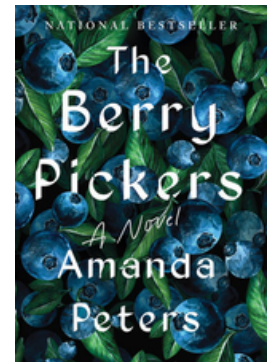
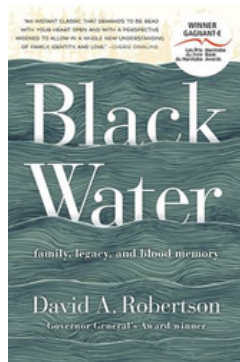
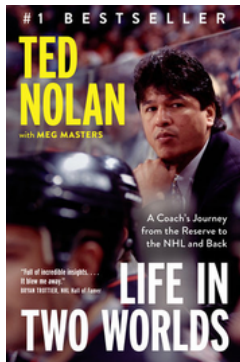
**RBC Foundation**

**Stories of Empowerment**

First Book Canada continued the [Stories of Empowerment Series](#), supported by the RBC Foundation, to provide Grade 11 and 12 students an opportunity to hear from a well-known author and speaker, both in person and virtually. Speakers shared stories of their life journey, including challenges faced and overcome, successes along the way, and their resiliency in the face of an unknown future. The events gave students a chance to reflect on an author's experiences and how they may relate to challenges they face in their own lives. We hosted five of the total eight events this year, with two in person and three virtual.

[Halifax West High School in Halifax, NS](#) hosted author Amanda Peters who presented to 150 Grade 11 and 12 students. Each student received a copy of her book, *The Berry Pickers*. [Abbotsford Senior Secondary School in Abbotsford, BC](#) hosted author Loghan Paylor who presented to 150 Grade 12 students. Each student received a copy of their book, *The Cure for Drowning*.

FBC partnered with Connected North to host three virtual events for 540 students across 17 secondary schools in Indigenous communities in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Nunavut. Author David Robertson presented at two events, and each participating student received copies of his books, *Black Water* and *All the Little Monsters: How I Learned to Live with Anxiety*. Author Ted Nolan presented at the third virtual event, and each participating student received a copy of his book, *Life in Two Worlds*.



## KPMG Foundation

May 24th, 2024, Toronto | December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Ottawa

**418 books in total provided**

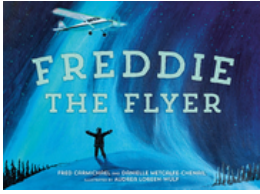
**60 Grade 1 & 2 students participated in Toronto at the Market Lane Junior and Senior Public School Reading Celebration, and 50+ Grade 5 students participated in Ottawa at the Carson Grove Elementary School Reading Celebration**

KPMG employee volunteers attended and read with students in small groups following the author presentations.

“Just wanted to share we had a great time at the book reading and the volunteers were great reading to the two classes! We had a great experience! The kids were so excited to pick and receive their books and were so happy they got to ‘keep them forever!’”

Samantha B.,  
Market Lane Junior and Senior Public School | Toronto, ON



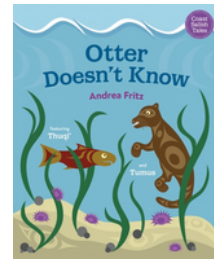


Central Spryfield Elementary School | Halifax, Nova Scotia  
January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Over 250 books were provided by First Book Canada

14 BMO employee volunteers participated in the event and read with the  
101 Grade 2 & 3 students in attendance

Lord Strathcona Elementary School | Vancouver, BC  
April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024



Over 400 books were provided by First Book Canada

3 BMO employee volunteers participated in the event and read with the  
90 Grade 1 & 2 students in attendance

“Thank you again for everything that had to come together for the successful event yesterday. The kids had a great time and were thrilled to get their own copies of Otter Doesn’t Know. Again, we appreciate your writing, Andrea, and will be looking forward to your next books, and we appreciate the support of First Book Canada and BMO for making this all happen.”

Mark C., Lord Strathcona Elementary School | Vancouver, BC



Our Lady of Pompeii School | Montreal, QC  
April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Over 300 books were provided by First Book Canada

15 BMO employee volunteers participated in the event and read with the  
87 Grade 1, 2 & 3 students in attendance

“Thank you all on behalf of all students for this extraordinary opportunity, they loved the event and entire experience!”

Lisa A., Our Lady of Pompeii School | Montreal, QC

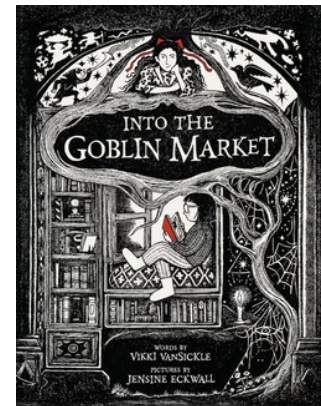
## Build-A-Bear Foundation

North York (June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

A total of 991 Marketplace books and resources were ordered for the event,  
with approximately 90 Grade 1, 2 & 3 students participating

“When we told the students that they were taking home the book that we selected to read with the volunteers, as well as other books and a Build-A-Bear teddy bear, they were so excited! I had put the books and bear in a bag, as a package, with a tag sharing who generously and kindly donated the items for them to take home at the end of the day. The students were so appreciative and happy to be given this opportunity, the books, and the bear!”

Karen B., Maple Leaf Public School | North York, ON



## Tata Sons

North York (June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024), Montreal (December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

1,069 Marketplace books and resources were ordered for the Toronto celebration

1,053 Marketplace books and resources were ordered for the Montreal celebration

The event in Toronto engaged approximately 100 Kindergarten students at Grenoble Public School, and the event in Montreal engaged approximately 100 Grade 3 students

“The event was a huge success! Vikki read to the students from her latest picture book, Into the Goblin Market, explaining her inspiration and asking the students to identify the fairy tales referenced in the words and illustrations. The students were eager to listen to Vikki’s story and answer her questions! The students were then treated to a reading of Say My Name by Joanna Ho given by volunteers from Tata in small reading circles. As part of this event the grade 3s were given a copy of Vikki VanSickle’s book, as well as 4 other titles from First Book Canada.”

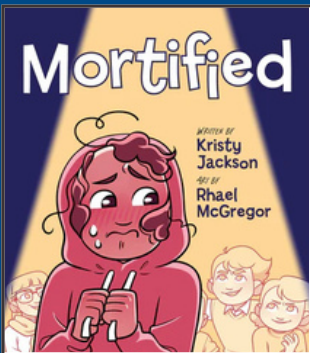
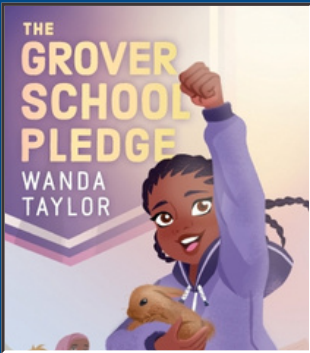
Stephanie G., Royal Vale Elementary School | Montreal, QC

It was so wonderful to see the joy on the kids faces as they picked their book and proudly put it in their backpack to take home. Some of them just couldn't resist and started reading right away. One student was so overcome that tears were brimming in his eyes as he took his book.

- Colleen, Pembina Hills Public Schools | Barrhead and Fort Assiniboine, AB



# RAPTORS 905 SUMMER READING CHALLENGE: BLOCKING THE SUMMER LEARNING SLIDE



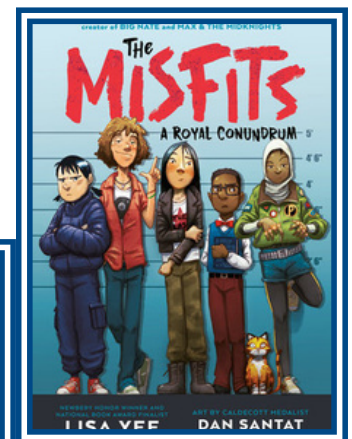
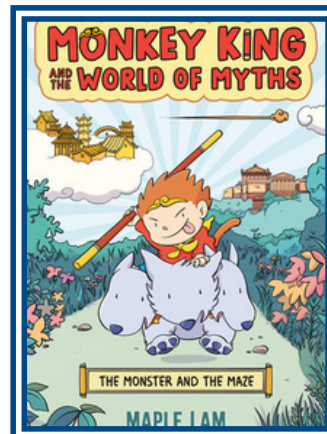
The ninth annual **Raptors 905 Summer Reading Challenge** was organized by First Book Canada in collaboration with **Raptors 905**, **Penguin Random House Canada**, **HarperCollins Canada**, **University of Guelph-Humber**, and **Tangerine Bank**. This year’s program launched on **June 22nd, 2024**, and ran until **August 5th, 2024**. The summer reading challenge was developed to curb the tide of learning loss referred to as the “summer slide”, which disproportionately affects kids in need. “84% of teachers say students forget or lose skills, knowledge, or grade-level equivalency over the summer.”

Grade five students (entering or graduating) from high-needs elementary schools in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) and the Peel Regional School Board were invited to join FBC and Raptors 905 in a **5-week virtual summer reading program, with 279 students registered in total**. 50 additional kids participated in the MLSE launchpad kickoff event and left with a book bag filled with great reads.

The reading challenge **gifted participants 279 bags filled with 1,395 brand-new books, allowing each child to read one book per week for five weeks**. At the end of each week, participants joined a virtual Reading Celebration to connect with the book’s author, community leaders and fellow students for Q&A and discussion. Participants also created weekly book reports in a variety of creative formats to further reflect on each book.

Davies, Scott, and Janice Aurini. “Summer Learning Inequality in Ontario.” Canadian Public Policy / Analyse de Politiques 39, no. 2 (2013): 287-307. <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/full/10.3138/CPP.39.2.287>.

- **Starting with a healthy mind and body.** To kick off the challenge, 100 grade five students joined us at the [MLSE LaunchPad](#) for a program launch event. Onsite, kids participated in activities to encourage skill development and teamwork, enjoyed lunch, and took home their bag of books for the summer.
- **A selection of diverse stories.** All five books focused on BIPOC representation to encourage students to reflect on and learn from underrepresented voices.



# TIME FOR CHANGE:

## DREAM. ACT. CHANGE OUR WORLD.

Launched on September 30, 2024, to mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, *Time for Change* is a national initiative designed to equip educators and young people with the mindset and tools to become changemakers.

Developed in partnership with **Ashoka Canada** and Swiss Haute Horlogerie manufacturer **Audemars Piguet**, the program is one way we are responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action #62—by building educational resources that celebrate the stories and impact of today’s Indigenous innovators.

Grounded in the core values of **empathy, leadership, teamwork, and action**, these resources support changemaking education in classrooms across Canada. Materials are available in **English, French, Inuktitut, Plains Cree, and Anishinaabemowin (Eastern Ojibwe)**, helping ensure this learning is inclusive, accessible, and transformative.

### WHAT IS A CHANGEMAKER?

A changemaker is someone who imagines a better reality, takes action, and collaborates with others to bring that new reality into being for the good of everyone.

### WHY CHANGEMAKING?

A world of rapid and accelerating change needs people who can adapt and contribute to change. Changemaking is an empowering mindset that combats indifference and apathy.\*

**Like all skills, changemaking requires practice.** Building changemaking abilities and mindsets supports the development of curiosity, solutions-orientation, the ability to mobilize others, and ultimately to effect positive change in the world.

These ways of thinking and doing prepare young people for the ever-changing world, and for the challenges they encounter.

# À L'HEURE DU CHANGEMENT :

## RÊVER, AGIR, CHANGER NOTRE MONDE



# Time for Change

## INSPIRING STORIES



With the launch of Time for Change, we also introduced a new category on the **First Book Canada Marketplace™**, featuring inspiring fiction and non-fiction by Canadian authors, all rooted in empathy, teamwork, leadership, or action. This dedicated collection began with 12 titles in 2024 and is set to grow to 50 by the end of 2025. Explore the full collection at [fbmpcanada.org/see-all-books/books-featured?cat=1931](https://fbmpcanada.org/see-all-books/books-featured?cat=1931).

## OUR IMPACT

### National Impact

Resources available in English, French, Inuktitut, Plains Cree, and Anishinaabemowin (Eastern Ojibwe) with more Indigenous language translations to be made available by the end of 2025.

**3100** Downloads reaching **18,500** Youth

### Global Impact

*Time for Change* programming is running in Canada, USA, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Brazil.

In 2024 *Time for Change* has impacted **155,000** educators reaching **4.7 million** students globally

To learn more, and download your free resources, visit [fbmpcanada.org/time-for-change-ca](https://fbmpcanada.org/time-for-change-ca)

*Matsqui, Kwantlen, Katzie and Semiahmoo First Nations.*



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**FIRST BOOK CANADA**   
Eliminating Barriers. Inspiring Young Minds.