



EMPOWERING EDUCATORS

PIZZA HUT AND FIRST BOOK LAUNCH COLLECTION OF ANTIRACISM RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

Leading experts provide educators with practical guidance and actionable steps for creating equity in the classroom

PLANO, Texas, August 19, 2020 – Pizza Hut and First Book today announced the launch of Empowering Educators – a collection of resources developed to provide educators with guidance and actionable steps to create equitable learning environments and navigate conversations about race and racism. They unveiled the initiative during a virtual event, “Empowering Educators: A Convening on Racial Equity in Education,” hosted by [American University’s Antiracist Research and Policy Center](#). The timely launch of these resources comes as the nation seeks to address issues of systemic racism during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has presented additional unprecedented challenges this school year.

These resources were created in response to a 2019 survey by First Book Research & Insights where 66 percent of educators indicated they wanted to proactively talk about race with students but didn’t feel comfortable doing so. In a follow up poll to assess whether conducting conversations about race with students was more, less or equally as important as it was six months ago, educators indicated conversations about race and racism have always been important but are now getting the appropriate prioritization.

“From the neighborhood to the national level, America is on a critical journey: from identifying racism, to deeper understanding – and finally to dismantling systemic racism,” said Kyle Zimmer, president, CEO and co-founder of First Book. “To support this journey, First Book is honored to partner with Pizza Hut to launch an unprecedented effort to empower educators – and the children they serve. These resources, and the important conversations they enable, will inspire and enlighten all of us as we work together with our educators to elevate equal opportunities for all of our children.”

Empowering Educators includes an introductory guidebook on antiracist pedagogy, an instructional video series, and other forthcoming educational resources. Developed for K-12 educators, the collection includes suggested books and activities to use with children at various ages, and features guidance on conversation modeling as well as answers to some of the most asked questions received in First Book’s 2019 survey. Empowering Educators resources can also be used by organizations, community action agencies, and families looking to build their understanding and awareness around creating equity in education. The guidebook and video series are free and available for anyone to access at www.firstbook.org/EmpoweringEducators.

The unveiling of this year-long project comes as Pizza Hut [recently appointed its first Chief Equity Officer, Chequan Lewis](#).

“Pizza Hut is introducing a new chapter in our long-standing commitment to literacy – focused on the intersection of equity and education,” said Lewis. “When we launched BOOK IT! 36 years ago, we set out to equip educators with relevant resources that would inspire their students. Pizza Hut is continuing this legacy today, but we’re taking it a step further – providing resources that help us chase equity by celebrating diversity, teaching empathy, and creating a safe space for everyone to learn while feeling comfortable as their authentic selves.”

Pizza Hut and First Book engaged renowned subject matter experts to develop Empowering Educators, including:

- **Christine Platt**, Managing Director, Antiracist Research & Policy Center at American University



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- **Britt Hawthorne**, Anti-Bias Antiracist Educator and Consultant
- **Tiffany Jewell**, NYT Best Selling Author and Antiracist Anti-Bias Educator and Consultant
- **Liz Kleinrock**, Award-Winning Educator and Founder, Teach & Transform
- **Catherine Wigginton Greene**, Executive Director of Content & Engagement, Point Made Learning
- **Cornelius Minor**, Author and Anti-Bias Antiracist Educator
- **Julye Williams**, Senior Advisor, First Book

“Contributing to the resources that make up the Empowering Educators series has been without a doubt the most phenomenal project I’ve had the honor of working on over the past year,” said Christine Platt. “In the midst of our turbulent social and political climate, people are demanding more than statements of solidarity. Individuals and organizations are understanding the importance and need for racial equity education and awareness, and these resources will be instrumental in furthering their important work.”

DIVERSE BOOKS: STORIES FOR ALL PROJECT™

As a companion to the Empowering Educators Collection, Pizza Hut and First Book have selected five of the most popular diverse titles on the [First Book Marketplace](#) and re-issued them in first-ever, affordable paperback editions. They will distribute 75,000 copies of these special-edition paperbacks, which are warm, affirming picture books that explore meaningful elements of identity that will be relatable to all readers.

- ***Alma and How She Got Her Name*** in English and ***Alma y cómo obtuvo su nombre*** in Spanish – written and illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal, published by Candlewick Press
- ***Bilal Cooks Daal*** – written by Aisha Saeed and illustrated by Anoosha Syed, published by Simon & Schuster
- ***Drawn Together*** – written by Minh Le and illustrated by Dan Santat, published by Hachette
- ***Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story*** – written by Kevin Noble Maillard and illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal, published by Macmillan
- ***Mommy's Khimar*** – written by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow and illustrated by Ebony Glenn, published by Simon & Schuster

Pizza Hut selected these titles from First Book’s Stories for All Project™, which curates new, relevant, high-quality books representing diverse characters, voices, and life circumstances and makes them available and affordable to educators who support kids in need. Books that feature characters from diverse cultures and backgrounds provide kids with rich insights and opportunities to learn more about themselves and others.

They also provide teachers with valuable tools for communication and open avenues for dialogue and increased understanding by students. First Book’s 2019 survey of registered members showed that 86% of educators need funding to purchase books and resources that support their efforts to create more inclusive classrooms.

To learn more about the Empowering Educators Collection and access the various resources, you can visit firstbook.org/EmpoweringEducators. Stay up to date on all things Pizza Hut by following along on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

About Pizza Hut®

Pizza Hut, a subsidiary of Yum! Brands, Inc. (NYSE: [YUM](#)), has more restaurant locations in the world than any other pizza company. Founded in 1958 in Wichita, Kan., Pizza Hut operates over 18,000 restaurants in more than 100 countries.



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With easy order options including the Pizza Hut app, mobile site, and Amazon and Google devices, Pizza Hut is committed to providing an easy pizza experience – from order to delivery – and has Hut Rewards, the Pizza Hut loyalty program that offers points for every dollar spent on food any way you order.

Pizza Hut has built a legacy of nurturing a love of reading through its BOOK IT! Program, which has impacted more than 65 million students in 35 years. The pizza company strengthened its commitment in 2016 when it launched [Pizza Hut: The Literacy Project](#), a commitment to impacting 100 million lives by enabling access to books and educational resources, empowering teachers and inspiring readers. Since 2016, Pizza Hut has impacted over 26.2 million lives through its literacy initiatives and programs. For more information, visit www.pizzahut.com. Pizza Hut is the Official and Only Pizza Sponsor of the NFL and NCAA®.

About First Book

Founded in Washington, D.C., in 1992 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit social enterprise, First Book is a leader in the educational equity field. Over its 27-year history, First Book has distributed more than 185 million books and educational resources, with a value of more than \$1.5 billion. First Book believes education offers children in need the best path out of poverty. First Book breaks down barriers to quality education by providing its network of more than 475,000 registered teachers, librarians, after school program leaders, and others serving children in need with millions of free and affordable new, high-quality books, educational resources, and basic needs items through the award-winning First Book Marketplace nonprofit eCommerce site. The First Book Network comprises the largest and fastest-growing community of formal and informal educators serving children in need.

First Book also expands the breadth and depth of the education field through a family of social enterprises, including First Book Research & Insights, its proprietary research initiative, and the First Book Accelerator, which brings best-in-class research to the classroom via relevant, usable educator resources. First Book Impact Funds target support to areas of particular need, such as rural communities or increasing diversity in children's books.

For more information, visit firstbook.org or follow the latest news on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About American University

The mission of [The Antiracist Research and Policy Center](#) at American University is to produce knowledge for change's sake. We engage in research of racial inequity and discrimination that leads to policy innovation and implementation. In its 127-year history, American University has established a reputation for producing changemakers focused on the challenges of a changing world. AU has garnered recognition for global education, public service, experiential learning and politically active and diverse students, as well as academic and research expertise in a wide range of areas including the arts, sciences, humanities, business and communication, political science and policy, governance, law and diplomacy.