
ALANE ADAMS

FIRST BOOK DONOR SPOTLIGHT

First Book is committed to helping students bridge a path out of poverty, and on a grander scale, create systemic change. That's inspiring!



HOW DID YOU FIRST LEARN ABOUT FIRST BOOK?

I first learned about First Book through my literacy foundation, Rise Up. I was doing some work on providing new books to kids that had been affected by natural disasters and my team discovered First Book as a perfect fit for the kind of partnership we were looking for. We were able to provide funding, but the ability to source large volumes of books at a low cost was a barrier. So far I'm proud to say we've done three projects in disaster-struck areas providing tens of thousands of new books to schools.

WHAT ABOUT FIRST BOOK'S MISSION SPEAKS TO YOU?

At first glance, my initial impression of First Book's mission was: books, books books, which is fantastic! We need to get books into the hands of kids in need if we want them to develop a love of reading, but a deeper dive revealed that First Book is much more than just books. They are committed to helping students bridge a path out of poverty, and on a grander scale, hoping to create systemic change. That's inspiring!

WHEN DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME AN AUTHOR?

I first decided to become an author at a very young age, but a lack of confidence and direction led me to many other great careers I enjoyed but never truly loved. There was always something missing, and countless times, I would hide away and write a story, only to shove it into a drawer and forget about it. It wasn't until my, then 12-year-old son, asked me to write him a book he could read that I was able to discover a passion for children's books and invest fully in my writing career.

WHERE DO YOU GET THE IDEAS FOR YOUR BOOKS?

Story ideas come from many places. First and foremost, authors have to have big imaginations and that comes from reading lots of books. Oftentimes when I set out to write a story, I have no clear idea what's going to happen, but that's part of the magic of writing.

When I sit down to write, I believe the story will come to me, which is important because if you don't think you can do it, your creativity simply won't step forward. So first I sit at my computer with great confidence and as my fingers move over the keys, ideas begin to flow and my characters began moving and talking and doing things. My characters frequently surprise me by going in the opposite direction or saying something I am not expecting, but that's part of the creative process for me.

TO YOU, WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF A GOOD BOOK?

The writing. Plain and simple. What makes a book good is when the writing doesn't get in the way of the story. It simply flows, the characters feel alive, and the action real. A good book is one in which we don't want it to end; one where we root for the characters and maybe shed a tear along the way. A good book moves us, makes us feel, makes us long to know these characters in real life.

IF YOU COULD SPEND THE DAY WITH A POPULAR AUTHOR, WHO WOULD YOU CHOOSE AND WHY?

That's a tough one! There are so many great authors out there. I think spending a day with Suzanne Collins would be fascinating — she doesn't give many interviews and I would love to understand more about her writing style and how she creates such fascinating characters.

YOU'VE CREATED THE VIDEO SERIES "BETWEEN THE PAGES" THAT DISCUSSES CRITICAL ELEMENTS IN A GOOD STORY. WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR ASPIRING AUTHORS WATCHING THE SERIES?

I really hope aspiring authors get a clear understanding of the elements of storytelling and develop the confidence to apply them in their own work. One of the elements I teach is how authors change their minds, which has resonated with students. The idea that stories are not set in stone, that they evolve and develop as we write them, gives students permission to make mistakes along the way.

WHAT ARE YOU READING RIGHT NOW?

My current read is *A Court of Silver Flames* by Sarah J. Maas. Fantasy is one of my favorite genres and she does a fantastic job with world-building and creating powerful, moving stories on a grand scale.

WHAT MIGHT SOMEONE BE SURPRISED TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I don't like eating dessert. Does that make me a monster?

WORKING TOGETHER

"My foundation is small, so it's empowering to access the scale at which First Book can operate to help us achieve our goals. I can't think of a more worthwhile organization doing valuable work to create real change in the lives of underserved children."



YOU VISIT WITH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS, WHAT SCHOOL VISIT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE AND WHY?

I've visited over 300 schools so it's hard to pick out a favorite one! What matters most is that the students are engaged and excited to have an author visit. The more engaged they are, the more amped up I get and the more fun we have. I really love it when the students create banners welcoming me and the hallway is lined with posters the kids have drawn of scenes from my books.

YOU LOVE TO TRAVEL, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE YOU'VE VISITED?

Another tough question—I've been to so many places in the world. I think one of the most beautiful trips was to New Zealand. We hiked glaciers, went sky diving, white water rafted, and bungee jumped. My second favorite would be Africa. Seeing lions up close and personal in Botswana was a life-long highlight.

YOU GENEROUSLY DONATE TO FIRST BOOK. WHAT WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS THINKING ABOUT SUPPORTING FIRST BOOK'S WORK?

I give to First Book because our missions are so closely aligned — getting books in the hands of underserved kids. My foundation is small, so it's empowering to be able to utilize the scale at which First Book can operate to help us achieve our goals. I can't think of a more worthwhile organization doing valuable work to create real change in the lives of underserved children.

200 MILLION

books and resources
distributed to date.

5 MILLION

children reached
annually.

FIRST BOOK SERVES 500,000+ EDUCATORS WHO PURCHASE BOOKS AND RESOURCES OUT OF THEIR OWN POCKET DAILY FOR THEIR STUDENTS. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU PASS ALONG?

I think what educators need to hear most right now is how valuable the work they are doing is. I don't think they hear that enough.

This last year has been particularly tough being thrust into remote teaching with little to no guidance or support, and yet teachers rose magnificently to do their best and give their students everything they had to keep them going.

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