

Big Red Bookshelf

A project of United Way of Greater Duluth



Book Drive Toolkit

About Big Red Bookshelf

The Big Red Bookshelf project places bright bookshelves stocked with gently-used or new books appropriate for children from Birth - 3rd grade in the community where families with young children visit. Books on the shelves have been donated by community members. Children are invited to take a book home to keep and share!

Why Books?

Studies show that about half of children in Duluth are not prepared for Kindergarten in language and literacy skills. If a child is successful in Kindergarten it is likely they will be successful in third grade. If they are successful in third grade it is likely they will graduate high school.

Big Red Bookshelf aims to give children easy access to age appropriate books. Providing books to young children in our community is vital to fostering a love and appreciation for reading for life.



**Big Red Bookshelf relies on donations from the community
to keep our shelves full!**

Thank you for hosting a book drive!

Organization of your book drive

Consider these topics when planning your book drive:

Who will participate? It could be your company, school, place of worship, community, etc.

Who will help you organize? Pull together a committee of interested people and delegate tasks. Consider asking department heads, human resource professionals, school staff, community members, students and volunteers.

Where will you collect books?

Where will you promote your book drive? You should collect books in a high-traffic, visible location and store in a dry, safe place until delivery.

When is a good time to collect books?

How long do you want the book drive to run? Consult a calendar to see if there are any special events that could kick off or close your book drive, such as I Love to Read Month (February), Read Across America (March), or Children's Book Week (May). Drives usually last two to four weeks.



Goals

Set meaningful goals for your book drive. If you publicize your goals, people will be eager to help you reach them.

Be sure to track your progress during the book drive and let people know how close you are to accomplishing the goal.

Promotion

How can you reach people to donate books? Consider using fliers, posters, e-mail, social media and word of mouth. Logos and ideas for posters can be provided to you from United Way staff. Sometimes a personal request is the best way to engage people. Be sure to include why you are collecting books, the type of books needed and the best way to contact the organizers. Communicating the mission of the drive, the need it fills and what organization and children gain from a successful drive is essential.

United Way of Greater Duluth staff are available to talk with your group or students about our program, the importance of reading and the impact of your book drive. We can also use our social media channels to promote your book drive and raise awareness to your contribution.



Setting up the site

Choose a high-traffic, visible location for your collection area. Put up posters about the drive including information on length, type of books you're collecting (children's books, picture books, etc.), the organizer's contact information and information on the Big Red Bookshelf. If people would like to donate money please have them call 218-726-4770.



Test the sturdiness of the collection bins/boxes to make sure they can last the duration of the drive. Plastic storage bins are great for collection while cardboard boxes are useful for storing and transporting books. Decorate your collection bin to help generate excitement about your book drive.

Kick-off and countdown

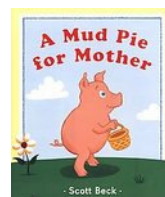
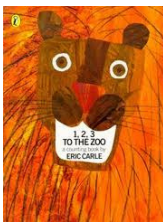
Consider holding a kick-off event to start your book drive or a final push to complete it. It will help raise awareness and create excitement for your drive. Are there any existing events that may bring people to the donation site? Include information about the drive in any publicity material about the primary event. Create handouts with book drive and Big Red Bookshelf information to give attendees.

In the last days before the book drive ends, put up a daily countdown to the end of your drive and how close you are to reaching your goal. People will be motivated by the deadlines as well as by how close you might be to your goal. Additionally, include a sign with the organizer's contact information in case someone would like to donate after the drive has ended.

Sorting and Delivery

It is not necessary to sort books during your drive, but would be helpful if you disposed of any books that are in poor condition. This includes worn or ripped pages and covers, excessive writing or scribbling on pages, and smelly or moldy books.

When your book drive is over, contact a United Way of Greater Duluth staff member to schedule a drop-off time to the United Way office. We can also arrange to pick up the books if necessary.



Thanks and Celebrate

After the book drive, remember to thank everyone who helped with the book drive – the organizers, the host site, donors, etc. If you are in a school setting recognize the classes with the most books donated.

At the collection site, post the final number of books collected as well as contact information in case someone would still like to donate.

Share book drive photos, anecdotes, and the final total of books collected with your collaborators and with United Way of Greater Duluth Big Red Bookshelf staff!

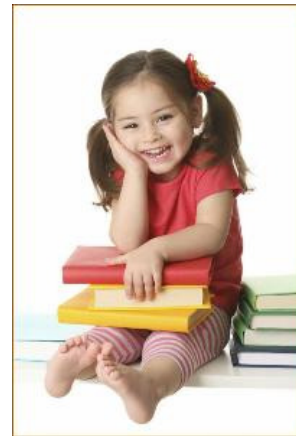
School tips

If holding a drive at a school, make sure you get permission from the appropriate parties such as the principal or site supervisor. Some districts have solicitation policies that may prohibit a drive for outside organizations.

In gaining permission, it may be helpful to note the ways students can benefit from a drive as organizers.

If you are unable to get permission from a school, consider other groups who may want to host a drive or serve as a collection point.

Include students on planning a drive. They will be eager to help it succeed and feel ownership in reaching their goal. Students can make posters, design collection boxes, track the number of books received, track progress towards their goal, and more!



Other tips

Consider partnering with another company/group for a challenge drive: which organization can raise the most books? Track and announce each group's progress to help motivate donors.

If you work for a large company and you are trying to engage your co-workers make it a fun competition between different departments to see who can raise the most books.

If donors would like to give money have them call United Way of Greater Duluth at 218-726-4770.

Ask new and used bookstores for donations.

Let any current school volunteers know about the drive and ways they can contribute.

Stop by garage sales with a book drive flyer to see if the household would consider donating books to the drive. If possible, offer to pick up books as well.

Questions, comments, suggestions

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about planning a book drive, the book drive kit, or United Way of Greater Duluth Big Red Bookshelf, please contact us at 218-726-4770.



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Big Red Bookshelf Locations

CHUM Family Shelter
Duluth Grill
Essentia Children's Emergency Department
Hermantown Food Shelf
Lake Superior Community Health Center Dental Clinic
Safe Haven Shelter
St. Luke's Pediatrics
Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Office

Interested in Hosting a Book Drive?

Contact: Stephanie Thompson
218-726-4728
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