

Indigo Love of Reading Foundation Announces \$1.5 Million in New Grants to 30 High-Needs Schools, Bringing Total Funds Committed to Over \$25 Million Since 2004

Toronto, ON (May 26, 2017) – Yesterday, 30 Canadian high-needs elementary schools across the country learned they are the 2017 recipients of the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation’s annual Literacy Fund grants. The high-needs elementary schools that applied for the 2017 Literacy Fund grants are profoundly dedicated to building literacy at their schools but struggle to provide books that are relevant and engaging to their students when their limited budgets mean that the average age of a book in their library is 20 years old. These 30 schools will now receive their portion of the \$1.5 million Literacy Fund grant over a three year period to invest in their school libraries. To date, the Foundation has committed over \$19.5 million dollars to over 245 high-needs elementary schools since 2004 through its Literacy Fund grant, and an additional \$5.5 million through its other programs.

“Over the past 13 years, we have seen the positive impact of these grants in communities across Canada. They have been hugely beneficial in cultivating literacy skills and a lifelong love of reading in kids from coast-to-coast,” said Heather Reisman, Chair of the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation. “We’d like to thank our customers and employees for their generous support as they are instrumental in making this day possible.”

The Indigo Love of Reading Foundation believes that regardless of socioeconomic conditions, all children deserve access to books. One of the most important predictors of higher achievement is a student’s love of reading¹. However, in a country where school library budgets continue to shrink, and teachers each year spend over \$200 million of their own money to make up for this funding gap², it is the students of high-needs elementary schools that face the harshest consequences of neglected school libraries.

To learn more about the literacy crisis in Canada, all Canadians are invited to watch the powerful documentary, *Read Between the Lines*, produced by Emmy-Award-winning documentarian, Ms. Ric Esther Bienstock. *Read Between the Lines* takes viewers to the frontlines of Canada’s sorely underfunded school libraries, and shows the power of what a Literacy Fund grant can accomplish. To view, please visit loveofreading.org.

As a result of this year’s Literacy Fund grants, over 9,000 students across the country will attend schools that have funds to purchase more than 150,000 books over the next three years.

The 2017 Indigo Love of Reading Foundation Literacy Fund Grant Recipients (by province):

- Vilna School, Vilna, Alberta
- Mee-Yah-Noh Elementary School, Edmonton, Alberta
- St. Rita Elementary School, Calgary, Alberta
- Alexander Elementary School, Duncan, British Columbia
- Lord Strathcona Elementary School, Vancouver, British Columbia
- William Konkin Elementary School, Burns Lake, British Columbia
- Forsyth Road Elementary, Surrey, British Columbia

¹ Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). (2009). *Learning to learn: Student engagement, strategies and practices* (Volume III). Paris, France: OECD; People for Education. (2011). *Reading for Joy*.

² Canadian Teachers’ Federation, *News Release: Teachers go out of pocket \$453 on materials and activities for their students* (July 12, 2010); Statistics Canada, *2011 National Household Survey – Occupation*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-012-X2011033.

- SenPokChin School, Osoyoos Indian Band, British Columbia
- Victor H. L. Wyatt School, Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Niji Mahkwa School, Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Priestman Street Elementary School, Fredericton, New Brunswick
- École Carrefour Beausoleil, Miramichi, New Brunswick
- École acadienne de Truro, Truro, Nova Scotia
- We'koqma'q Mi'kmaw School, Waycobah First Nation, Nova Scotia
- Aq̓arniit Middle School, Iqaluit, Nunavut
- Ataguttaaluk Elementary School, Igloolik, Nunavut
- St. Michael School, Hamilton, Ontario
- Essex Public School, Toronto, Ontario
- Munden Park Public School, Mississauga, Ontario
- Regent Heights Public School, Toronto, Ontario
- St. James Catholic School, Toronto, Ontario
- Amherstburg Public School, Amherstburg, Ontario
- Hillcrest Elementary, Hamilton, Ontario
- Parkdale Elementary School, Hamilton, Ontario
- General Mercer Junior Public School, Toronto, Ontario
- Central Queens Elementary, Hunter River, Prince Edward Island
- St. Dorothy Elementary School, Montreal, Québec
- École Saint-Rédempteur, Gatineau, Québec
- John Diefenbaker Public School, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
- St. Frances Cree Bilingual School, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Since its inception in 2004, the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation has donated more than \$25 million to more than 3,000 schools, benefiting more than 900,000 Canadian children. Schools interested in applying for the 2018 Indigo Love of Reading Foundation Literacy Fund grant can learn more at www.loveofreading.org.

Indigo Love of Reading Foundation & First Book Canada Grant Day Partnership

In addition to the 2017 Literacy Fund grants, the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation has once again partnered with First Book Canada, which provides new books to children in need, addressing one of the most important factors affecting literacy – access to books. As part of this partnership, the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation and First Book Canada will provide more than 1,500 new books to each of the 30 runner-up schools that applied for the Literacy Fund grant, a donation of more than 45,000 books in total. This year books will be generously donated from Bayard, Les Editions Heritage, Disney Worldwide Publishing, Marvel Press, Disney Press, Lucasfilm Press, and Hyperion Press.

To learn more about the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation, please visit www.loveofreading.org.

About the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation

Indigo Books & Music Inc. founded the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation in 2004 to address the underfunding of public elementary school libraries. To date, the Foundation has committed over \$25 million to more than 3,000 high-needs schools, impacting over 900,000 children. The Foundation runs two signature programs each year. In May 2017, the Indigo Love of Reading Literacy Fund grant provided transformational support of \$1.5 million to 30 high-needs elementary schools that lack the resources to build and maintain healthy school libraries. To date, the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation's Literacy Fund has committed \$19.5 million to more than 245 schools nationally. Additionally, each fall, the Foundation's annual grassroots Adopt a School program unites the Foundation with Indigo, its employees, its customers and their communities to raise funds to support high-needs elementary schools across Canada and put even more books into the hands of children. In October 2016, Indigo Adopt a School contributed over \$800,000 to more than 500 schools. To learn more about the Foundation, visit www.loveofreading.org



About First Book Canada

First Book Canada provides new books to children in need, addressing one of the most important factors affecting literacy - access to books. By making new, high quality books available on an ongoing basis, First Book Canada is transforming the lives of children and elevating the quality of education in the country. Since 2009, First Book Canada has distributed over 5.5 million brand new books to children in need across Canada. All funds raised in Canada go to programs serving children from low-income families. For more information, or to register with First Book Canada, visit us at www.firstbookcanada.org and follow our latest news on Twitter and Facebook.

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