



## First Book-Charlotte will grant more than 30,000 new books with proceeds from this year's Spring Gala

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**(Charlotte, NC) – July 7 – First Book-Charlotte is proud to announce that this year's Spring Gala raised more than \$100,000.** Fast becoming known as one of Charlotte's premier fun and eclectic events. Guests dressed in their finest and came together to enjoy a spectacular "*Evening of Magic*" to celebrate the magic of books and raise funds to provide new books for local children in need.

When guests arrived at ImaginOn in uptown Charlotte they were treated to a cocktail reception and participated in a silent auction, all while being amazed by Hannibal the Magician. Also adding to the magic was the well know sketch artist, Krandel Lee Newton who was on hand providing his unique [Original Butt Sketches](#) for all to enjoy.

Later in the evening guests enjoyed dinner and the soothing jazz delights of Beth Chorneau. After dinner First Book-Charlotte's Gala Chair, Jennifer Saltzman thanked the attendees and said, "In order for our children to love reading and learning, they need to have access to books." Ms. Saltzman then introduced special guest Anna Williamson from First Book's national office in Washington D.C. who shared a heart warming story about a mother and her son who came in to a regional Habitat for Humanity office to purchase furniture for their new home. Instead of asking for a chair or table, though, the mother asked for a bookshelf for her little boy. It turned out the young man is in a First Book program and for the first time he needed his very own bookshelf for all the books he received from First Book.

Honored guest Bart Kofoed, President of [2XSalt](#), accepted a year long book grant on behalf of the children they serve. 2XSalt is a local charity founded by former NBA players Bobby Jones, David Thompson, and Bart Kofoed. Together, they continue to build the organization with the overall vision of serving the youth of Charlotte through creating and sustaining meaningful programs that focus on youth who are challenged spiritually, educationally, emotionally, economically, and socially.

For the first time ever, First Book-Charlotte held an All-Star First Book Speed Read™. This engaging and energetic event shines a playful spotlight on reading and literacy. Guests such as Mike Redding of WCNC-TV's Carolina Traveler along with several others speed read as many words as possible from a children's book in just 15 seconds. One attendee decided to pledge 1 new book for every word read totaling more than a 665 new books from the Speed Read. Caterer Best Impressions created a signature drink to enhance the mood, and guests sipped on a "SpeedTini" cocktail while challengers sped aloud through Dr. Seuss.

The evening's entertainment was rounded out with a rousing and highly entertaining live auction with Guest Auctioneer Tom Mathews, a Time Warner Cable Executive and FBC board member. In addition to the assortment of auction lots, Mike Redding and Anna Crowley "brought up the rear" by offering to do a Butt Sketch with the highest bidder.

All proceeds of the evening benefited children through the local programs that First Book-Charlotte partners with to provide children of low income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. **This year enough money was raised to purchase more than 30,000 new books.**

If you couldn't make it out to this year's Gala, you missed out on a heart warming and enjoyable night. It's a good thing this event continues to get better with every passing year. Be sure to keep your eyes peeled for information on the 3rd Annual First Book-Charlotte Spring Gala to be held next year.

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First Book-Charlotte would like to thank Platinum Sponsors: Time Warner Cable, Freddie Mac and AIG United Guaranty, Gold Sponsors: INT2, Nokia Siemens Networks, and Bearing Point, Silver Sponsors: PAETEC, AARIS, BroadBand Insights, CedarPoint, and Hearst Service Center, Bronze Sponsors: Symmetricon, Concurrent, Dixon-Hughes, Harmonic, HPI Management, Hutton & Williams LLP, IBM, Fannie Mae, Cisco, Spectrum Properties and the Maniero Family. They would also like to thank media sponsor Charlotte Magazine and Sketch Artist Sponsor TimCorp Group.

First Book - Charlotte is part of First Book's national network of volunteer-led Advisory Boards who provide new books to children in need in communities across the country. Comprised of volunteers from all sectors of the community, First Book – Charlotte works to promote and facilitate the distribution of new books to children of literacy programs in the Charlotte and surrounding areas.

**“A book should not be a luxury,” said Colleen Ludington, FBC Chairperson. “Thanks to our sponsors and attendees, thousands more children in Charlotte will be able to begin their own home libraries.”**

Access to books is essential to reading development. However, 61 percent of low-income families have no books for children in their homes. Additionally, over 80 percent of childcare centers serving low-income children lack age-appropriate books and other print materials. By providing children from low-income families with books they can take home and keep, First Book targets the only variable that correlates significantly with reading scores—the number of books in the home.

#### **About First Book – Charlotte**

First Book-Charlotte has been distributing books to programs serving low-income children since 2005. The First Book Advisory Board is comprised of individuals from the community representing organizations and businesses such as Time Warner Cable, KPMG, Dixon-Hughes, Bank of America, and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools. In 2007, First Book –Charlotte distributed 25,000 books to children participating in local programs First Book-Charlotte meets the first Thursday of every month. For more information about First Book-Charlotte or to make a donation, please visit [www.firstbookcharlotte.org](http://www.firstbookcharlotte.org).

#### **About First Book**

First Book is a nonprofit organization with a single mission: to give children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. In neighborhoods across the country, First Book Advisory Boards unite leaders from all sectors of the community to provide books to children in literacy programs, shelters for battered children, housing project initiatives, soup kitchens, after-school programs and other community-based efforts reaching children living at or below the poverty line. Since its inception in 1992, First Book has distributed more than 60 million new books to children in need in hundreds of communities nationwide. For more information about First Book, or to make a donation to help children in need, please visit [www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org).

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