



First Book-Charlotte gives & gives! More than 80,000 new books awarded in Charlotte since 2006.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Charlotte, NC) – June 15 – First Book-Charlotte is proud to announce that this year’s Spring Gala raised more than \$75,000, helping them cross the milestone of 80,000 new books to be granted to organizations in the Queen City. Billed as not your average Gala, First Book supporters convened at the Ballantyne Village Theatre on May 29th to celebrate the magic of books at their annual Spring Gala & Auction.

Last year’s guest was this year’s host, as award-winning journalist Mike Redding took the mike to highlight the need for books in the Charlotte Community. Redding was joined by Charlotte businessman and auctioneer Earnest Perry of Perry’s of SouthPark, who hosted a lively auction that helped bring in thousands of dollars to support First Book-Charlotte’s mission. Also featured at this year’s Gala was honored guest, and grant recipient Anita Self, from YWCA of the Central Carolinas.

Recent studies have shown that in Charlotte alone, there are nearly 100,000 children living in poverty. Those numbers increase in First Book-Charlotte’s reach into Mecklenburg & Union counties.

“In a time when people are looking very carefully at their expenses, we were thrilled to have the support of individuals and corporations like Time Warner Cable, SunTrust Mortgage, and KPMG,” said First Book-Charlotte Chairperson and co-Founder Colleen Ludington. “Not only do people understand the importance of providing books to children from low-income families, but they also embrace that because it only costs First Book about \$2.00 for a book, and 100% of their donation is used to provide books, donations small and large go a long way to helping grow a new generation of readers in Charlotte. Funds from this year’s event will help us cross the 80,000 book milestone as we award our grants for the upcoming 2009-2010 school year. We couldn’t be more thrilled.”

Attendees boogied the night away to the sounds of Too Much Sylvia, and were once again sated by the catering from Best Impressions. Now part of the Regal Entertainment Group, Ballantyne Village Theatre rolled out the red carpet for Gala guests and sponsors who flew in from San Francisco, Denver, Washington DC, and beyond to attend this year’s event.

All proceeds of the evening benefited children through the local programs that First Book-Charlotte partners with to provide children from low income families with the opportunity to read and own their first new books. Book grants provide children with a home library to call their own, and the books are selected by the receiving organization. **This year enough money was raised to purchase more than 25,000 new books.**

First Book-Charlotte would like to thank Platinum Sponsors: Time Warner Cable and EMC2, Gold Sponsors: INT2, SunTrust Mortgage, Silver Sponsors: Hearst Service Center, Concurrent, ARRIS, Big Band Networks, Symmetricom, and Nokia Siemens Network, Bronze Sponsors: BroadBand Insights, and supporters Spectrum Properties and Family Dollar. They would also like to thank media sponsor Time Warner Cable and Entertainment Sponsor Knex.

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 Mecklenburg and Union counties.

Access to books is essential to reading development. However, 61% of low-income families have no books for children in their homes. Additionally, over 80% 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 2006. The First Book Advisory Board is comprised of individuals from the community representing organizations and businesses such as Time Warner Cable, KPMG, Dixon-Hughes, WCNC, and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools. Since 2006, First Book –Charlotte has provided grants for more than 60,000 new 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.

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 70 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.

Contacts:

First Book – Charlotte
Colleen Ludington, Chairperson
704-621-0066
cludington@firstbookcharlotte.org

Jennifer Saltzman
704-222-6933
jsaltzman@firstbookcharlotte.org