

Teen Readers Society to Launch New Book Donation Program for Young Afghan Refugees

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SANTA MONICA, Calif., November 15, 2021 -- Teen Readers Society today announced that it is providing up to 2,000 books to Afghan children and adolescents resettling in the United States as part of Phase One of a new English literacy program. The books are being donated to the program by Better World Books and Penguin Random House.

Millions of Afghans have been displaced amid a growing humanitarian crisis caused by the Taliban who took control of Afghanistan in mid-August of 2021. The book donation program will prioritize the most vulnerable arrivals, children and families who are struggling to find permanent housing and are currently in the care of the U.S. federal government. Teen Readers Society is partnered with Team Rubicon and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to distribute the donation at Doña Ana Village in New Mexico.

[Teen Readers Society](#) (TRS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working to reverse declining teen reading rates by getting books into the hands of vulnerable and low-income youth who lack adequate access to reading.

"Better World Books is delighted to help with this book donation program for young Afghan refugees. Each book donated reflects our key partnership with our global library partners and our joint commitment to making a real difference through literacy projects."
– Martin Mullin, Literacy Council Chair, Better World Books

"At Penguin Random House, we believe in the power of books and their ability to help people build better futures for themselves and their communities," said Claire von Schilling, EVP, Director, Corporate Communications & Social Responsibility. "We are honored to partner with Teen Readers Society to provide books that will help Afghan children and families advance their reading and English language skills in the midst of this humanitarian crisis."

English Literacy at Doña Ana Village, New Mexico

USAID is an independent federally funded agency whose mission is to promote and demonstrate democratic values abroad to advance a free, peaceful, and prosperous world. They lead the U.S. government's international development and disaster assistance programs to help people emerge from humanitarian crises. Together with Team Rubicon, who is facilitating the logistics of delivering the book donation safely into the Doña Ana Village at Fort Bliss, NM, Teen Readers Society can provide the necessary educational materials to advance English language learning which is being provided through USAID's program outreach efforts.

"Learning to read and write in any language begins with a book. Providing these English language books to Afghan children and teens is the first step in creating an equitable future for them," said Michael Norris, Teen Readers Society's Co-Founder and Head of Marketing. "English language proficiency is fundamental and essential for quality of life in the United States. We know that limited English proficiency in the U.S. results in numerous consequences,

including poorer health outcomes and diminished achievement potential. The children and teens we're supporting are being housed by the federal government because they have nowhere else to go. This donation and the program we're building tells them they are not alone, and they will not be forgotten."

Of the 1,500 English language students at Doña Ana Village, approximately 90% arrived with little to no English comprehension. While most students are children and teens, there are some adults who are eager to learn English as well. The donation comprises of mostly board and picture books as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) and chapter books for the small number of students that arrived with moderate levels of English comprehension. USAID workers facilitate youth and family activities such as read along and one-on-one tutoring.

"The school at Fort Bliss is grateful to receive Teen Readers Society's donation of books for Afghan refugees. The children and teens who are living here are excited to be in the United States and to become Americans. They are committed to being here and to learn English. This donation of books allows us to meet the increasing educational appetites of our eager, bright and capable English learning students." Said Maury Mendenhall, Senior Technical Advisor, Orphans and Vulnerable Children, US Government.

Future Developments

Teen Readers Society intends to grow the book donation for Afghan English learners to include thousands more children and teens being housed by the federal government at other military installations spread out across the country. Teen Readers Society will continue to work with organizers and teachers on the ground with USAID to properly tailor the books as demand changes dynamically.

About Better World Books

Better World Books is a for-profit, socially conscious business and a global online bookseller that collects and sells new and used books online, matching each purchase with a book donation. Each sale generates funds for literacy and education initiatives in the U.S., the UK, and around the world. Since its launch in 2003, Better World Books has raised more than \$32 million for libraries and literacy, donated over 31 million books, reused or recycled more than 386 million books, and sold over 100 million books.

About Penguin Random House LLC

Penguin Random House, the world's largest trade book publisher, is dedicated to its mission of nourishing a universal passion for reading by connecting authors and their writing with readers everywhere. The company, which employs more than 10,000 people globally, was formed on July 1, 2013, by Bertelsmann and Pearson. As of April 1, 2020, Bertelsmann is the full owner of the company. With more than 300 imprints and brands on six continents, Penguin Random House comprises adult and children's fiction and nonfiction print and digital English- and Spanish-language trade books, with publishing businesses in more than 20 countries worldwide. With over 15,000 new titles and more than 600 million print, audio, and eBooks sold annually, Penguin Random House's publishing lists include more than 80 Nobel Prize laureates and hundreds of the world's most widely read authors.

About Teen Readers Society

Teen Readers Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) public benefit organization working to reverse the decline in reading rates among teenagers. We are teen-driven, creating content that engages readers of all levels and interests on social and community building platforms. We seek to cut across the barriers that have created negative attitudes about reading for teenagers and restore excitement about the pleasures of reading and books. Our vision is to ensure that all children and young people have access to books.

Website: www.teenreaderssociety.org Instagram: @teenreaderssociety
Please visit our [donation page](#) if you wish to support our programs.

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