

For Immediate Release

The Campaign for
**GRADE-LEVEL
READING**

3RD GRADE READING
SUCCESS MATTERS

Contact: Ernestine Benedict
202-491-3950
ebenedict@gradelevelreadin.net

FIRST BOOK HONORED AS PACESETTER IN EARLY LITERACY WORK

Washington, DC, April 7, 2016 – Today at the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading’s third annual Funder-to-Funder Huddle with over 200 philanthropic leaders from across the country, First Book was recognized as a 2015 Pacesetter Partner, cited for its significant and sustained contributions toward improving early learning outcomes for children in underserved communities.

“All of us at First Book are inspired and honored to support the goals of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and the heroic work of communities across the country,” said Kyle Zimmer, First Book President, CEO and Co-Founder. “We are partners in one of the most important struggles of our time. Education – and literacy in particular -- is a central social issue because it is at the heart of criminal justice, healthcare, economic opportunity and civil rights. While we celebrate all that we have accomplished together today, we are committed to creating solutions that will deliver dramatic results and create new opportunities for millions of children across the country.”

In honoring First Book, Ralph Smith, managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level, cited several recent initiatives “that demonstrate First Book’s commitment and contribution to the GLR Campaign”, including:

- Providing a unique book distribution opportunity that resulted in an infusion of 90,000 brand new books across 10 GLR communities.
- Partnering with 50 Fund (the legacy fund of Super Bowl 50 Host Committee) and the GLR Campaign to provide 60,000 books to 97 organizations serving kids in need across the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Working with Turn the Page KC to host a week-long book distribution with over 18,000 boxes of books delivered to local schools, nonprofit organizations, and early learning centers throughout Kansas City, Missouri.
- Collaborating with the GLR Campaign, Mind in the Making and Vroom to develop Book Club 2.0, an innovative two-generation program for families living in public housing.

Most recently, First Book and the GLR Campaign have been tapped as key literacy partners for the National Afterschool Association's bold goals for promoting literacy in afterschool settings.

"For a child with limited access to books, a new book that is his or hers to keep can be the key to unlocking the joy of reading," said Smith. "By bringing the treasure of new books to the homes and schools of children from low-income families, First Book removes a barrier to early literacy and helps to put children on the path to success in school and in life. A leader in promoting reading and literacy, First Book is a deeply valued partner of the GLR Campaign."

The GLR Campaign also awarded 2015 Pacesetter Honors to 38 communities across the country for their progress in addressing at least one of the three challenges to early reading success – school readiness, chronic absence, and summer learning loss, as well as demonstrating factors key to sustainability.

About First Book

First Book is a nonprofit social enterprise that has distributed more than 145 million books and educational resources to programs and schools serving children from low-income families throughout the United States and Canada. By making new, high-quality books and educational resources available on an ongoing basis to its network of educators and program leaders, First Book is transforming the lives of children in need and elevating the quality of education. For more information, please visit firstbook.org or follow the latest news on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

About the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Launched in May 2010, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort of funders, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that many more children from low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. By 2020, the GLR Campaign aims to increase by at least 100 percent the number of children from low-income families reading proficiently by the end of third grade in 12 states or more. The GLR Campaign includes more than 240 communities, representing 42 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands with 2,100 local organizations (including 130 United Ways and 250 state and local funders). To learn more, visit gradelevelreading.net and follow us on Twitter [@readingby3rd](#).

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