



Message from the Director

The new year has been filled with excitement for Kids Need to Read. We continue to grow at a rapid pace thanks to the wonderful support we are receiving from those who believe in our mission as strongly as we do. It has been a joy to give so many superb books to our recipients, knowing that they will be an inspiration to the children who read them. Whether it be assisting in giving over 3,000 books to the marvelous Friends of the New Orleans Public Library or giving smaller donations to schools in great need, the pleasure is always the same. In this newsletter, you will find stories and testimonials about some of the donations we have made in the past three months. Don't miss the kids' letters. Nothing could better illustrate the importance of books than the words of the children.

February was dedicated to raising funds for the Odessa Brown Children's Clinic. This clinic, awarded the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy in 2006 for their work to reach low-income children most at risk for school failure, gives books to their young patients at their well child checks. For many of these children, the books are an exciting treasure -- their only source for receiving a book to call their own. Our fundraising drive resulted in \$1,700. We have ordered 320 new books for the Odessa Brown Children's Clinic to distribute and excitedly await their arrival. We thank all of you who enthusiastically supported our February auctions, as well as the Northern Virginia Browncoats and those who made generous personal donations for this drive.

Some of the Kids Need to Read volunteers had way too much fun working at the Phoenix Cactus Comicon in January. Hijinks did ensue! It was thrilling to meet some of the authors on the KNTR book list, as well as to give away books at our discussion panel. We had two fruitful fundraisers at the convention, thanks to the generosity of SpazDog Comics and the Dune Sea Garrison of the 501st Stormtroopers. Those funds will result in donations to struggling schools in Mesa and Tempe, Arizona. Look for those stories in our next newsletter. You can read about our fun in this edition.

Our next event will be San Diego Comic-Con International in July, where we plan to spend some time volunteering in the Southern California Browncoats' booth. Please come see us there and support both the SoCal Browncoats and Kids Need to Read. We would love to meet and thank all of you.

Denise Gary

[Visit Kids Need to Read!](#)

New Orleans Donation Update

The Kids Need to Read 2007 year-end donation of books to the libraries of New Orleans took on behemoth proportions, growing from an impressive single pallet of high-end books to a stupendous four full pallets. The final gift was over 3,000 books valued at more than \$150,000! The books reached their final destination at the end of January. Katelyn Castleberry, the Executive Director of the Friends of the New Orleans Public Library, is overseeing the distribution of the books for the library system. "We were blown away," said Castleberry.

Assisting the libraries and schools of New Orleans in their recovery from Hurricane Katrina is a strong focus for Kids Need to Read. Eight of the thirteen public libraries of New Orleans were demolished in the disaster. Because all resources go toward rebuilding the destroyed libraries, funding for new books is non-existent beyond what the Friends of the New Orleans Public Library raise. Castleberry describes the hardships still hanging heavily over the Crescent City:

People think that time has erased the challenges that Katrina posed to the Gulf South. Time has helped us heal but every day is a challenge in this environment. We have to work harder than ever to maintain our schools, libraries and culture. We are at a pivotal time in history where every step affects the future. Your gift has infused us with bounty, kindness and most importantly something to share.

Kids Need to Read credits the generosity of Jade Corn of Phoenix Book Company and the influence of PJ Haarsma for the amazing donation made on behalf of the Kids Need to Read program. Kids Need to Read was tapped by Phoenix Book Company to facilitate the donation by finding an appropriate beneficiary for the types of books being donated, as well as acting as a liaison between all parties and coordinating the details of the donation. Phoenix Book Company absorbed the costly expense of shipping the books to New Orleans.

In describing Kids Need to Read, Katelyn Castleberry quoted a patron of the Friends of the New Orleans Public Library, "You sure do spread that reading around!"

[Read other KNTR donation stories!](#)

New Books Delivered to Two Under-Funded Schools

Kids Need to Read used its January funds to make two large donations to school libraries in California and New Jersey. We were moved by the heartfelt submissions we received from these schools and hope to make a difference for their students.

Kristina Kim, a fifth grade teacher at Sutro Elementary School in San Francisco, California, told us of the lack of new reading material available to the students of Sutro:

My school library is very small and outdated. We don't have the budget to buy many books every year, but we make do with what parents donate. The kids in my school are voracious readers and love books of all kinds. I would love to see them with an up-to-date library, and perhaps some more of the classics, without the torn covers that have been loved to pieces.

Kids Need to Read sent the school 20 new books valued at \$300.00, giving their students fresh and exciting material to read. Kristina sent KNTR an enthusiastic thank you:

I just got the box on Wednesday! Thank you so much. The Librarian, Molly, is thrilled with the fact they are hardback books. They will surely last longer than any paperback we have in stock. The titles are amazing! And the kids in my class were ogling them on Thursday, asking to borrow them already! Thank you, thank you!

Nicole Sette, Media Specialist at New Brunswick High School in New Brunswick, New Jersey, sent Kids Need to Read a message expressing the especially dire situation of her library:

The Library at New Brunswick HS serves approximately 1200 students in grades 9-12. We have a 100% minority population, the majority being African American and Latino. Due to years of neglect there is no age appropriate YA fiction to reflect their lives and interests. We also have a large population of special needs students with no materials to reflect their reading levels.

New Brunswick High School was sent a total of 25 new books valued at \$400.00. Special care was given to meet the cultural and reading level needs requested in the submission letter. Nicole expressed her appreciation in a letter to Kids Need to Read when the books were on their way to her:

These are great! I'm so excited -- you are sending me some that were on my "wish list" for the library!

And after she received the books:

I am so happy to finally have some age-appropriate fiction for students to read -- I've already started processing them and getting them shelf ready. Thanks again!

The volunteers of Kids Need to Read are always excited when new donations are made, knowing that kids will find joy and inspiration in the exciting adventures found within the covers of their new books.

[Read more donation requests on our Community Page.](#)

Letters from Schools, Libraries and Children

We've received numerous letters of heartfelt gratification from teachers, librarians and school children. Here are a few of their letters.

From Katelyn Castleberry, Executive Director, The Friends of The New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, Louisiana. January 29, 2008:

We received the book shipment last week. We were blown away.

We cannot really quantify how extremely helpful this shipment will be to both the Friends and the Library. Your donations were so top notch that we were able to fill gaps in the Library's collections across the city. Also our book buyers were amazed at the quality items we were able to bring to the book sale. We also have a large number of neighborhood centers, shelters and organizations that we were able to drop off books to. Often these places receive little if any donations of reading material and if they do, it is usually of a low quality. We feel very fortunate to have been thought of by your organization, and have tried to begin spreading the generosity of your donation throughout the city. It is not often that one donation can help us impact so many different people spread out so far.

If in the future the Friends of the New Orleans Public Library may ever be of any assistance to you and your organization, please let us know. You have really given us a tool to make a large difference to a great number of people. Thank you so much.

We also enjoy receiving your newsletter; please keep us on your email list so that we may keep up with your happenings.

Thank you.

From Katelyn Castleberry, Executive Director, The Friends of The New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, Louisiana. January 30, 2008:

I have just returned from another successful book sale in some very ugly weather. I have another thanks to address to you and your organization. We have a small dollar amount that we simply must maintain as the end result of our sales. This dollar amount is the smallest amount of money that we can operate on. Today our volunteers were able to bring many more of your donations out to the sale. It was a rainy, windy, cold day. Usually no one even comes out to buy books in this weather, but we had many attendees due to the few selections of your books that they were able to see last week. (And I had been telling everyone about the books, as we were sorting them.) We passed our minimum sales quota on a day when we might not have been able to make half that if we did not have the buzz that these books created.

I wish you could see the shelves in the main library's acquisition department. They kept so many of your selections. They were beside themselves!

Our volunteer who helps the most with our community outreach programs came back today and took 2 more crates to shelters and community centers.

You have given us so much abundance that we have to share it with New Orleans and even further into Louisiana.

People think that time has erased the challenges that Katrina posed to the Gulf South. Time has helped us heal but every day is a challenge in this environment. We have to work harder than ever to maintain our schools, libraries and culture. We are at a pivotal time in history where every step affects the future. Your gift has infused us with bounty, kindness and most importantly something to share.

Thank You and everyone who helped make this possible for so many of us. What a joy it is to share these books with everyone. They are of the best quality.

Thank you so much.

From the Students of Sutro Elementary School, San Francisco, California. April 10, 2008:

Dear Kids Need to Read Foundation,

Thank you for all the wonderful books. We really appreciate it, and will learn a lot from reading them. Everyone in our school will be so happy that we got new books in our library. I wish that we could repay you with something. All these books must be very expensive. Thank you for donating!

*Sincerely,
Karen*

Dear Kids Need to Read Foundation,

Thank you very much for donating books for our school library. We really appreciate it. We will use the books nicely. We won't do bad things to them. It really helps our school library because other people can read it in our school if other children are interested. We will all read them and will not waste them. This means a lot to our school because reading is important. Kids can learn a lot by reading.

Donating books helps our school a lot. Thank you for your kindness. You are very helpful. We hope you donate more books to help more children learn how to read.

*Sincerely,
Stephanie*

Dear Kids Need to Read Foundation,

Thank you for the library books that you gave to my school. I appreciate your kindness and that you gave us a lot of books. I wish we could repay you for all this stuff. Every kid in the school will love the books. You guys helped the whole school because now we can read more books instead of our old ones. Now you made our school a little more special. Now we don't have to buy books for a little while because you donated many books. I just can't wait until I read the books you sent us.

*Sincerely,
Alexander*

Dear Kids Need to Read Foundation,

Thank you for donating books to our library. I am excited to read the books because it is important and sometimes fun to read. I might even learn some things. I don't know the titles of the books you donated, but I am grateful. We appreciate your donations and will try to take care of them.

That was really thoughtful and nice of you to donate some books or a lot of books to us. We don't really get a lot of book donations, so that is why we are so happy.

*Sincerely,
Melanie*

Dear Kids Need to Read,

Thank you for donating the books to our library. I can't wait to read all the books that you donated. I know I'll read them because I like to read. We really appreciate you for donating all those books. I think that kids need to read books, because books are very important.

*Sincerely,
Jun Wan*

Dear Kids Need to Read,

Thank you for donating the books to our library. I can't wait to read them because they sound like interesting books. I can't even imagine all of the books I'm going to read. There will be even more books that I can check out from the library. I know many students will enjoy reading the books you donated to our school's library. We really appreciate your donation.

*Sincerely,
Claire*

Dear Kids Need to Read,

Thank you for giving us those books. The books you gave us are great. We are very happy you gave them to us. We are thankful for your help. Our school is lucky we have some books from you. Our school is lucky that we have some science fiction books now.

Thank you for the books. Our librarian is labeling them and putting them on the shelf now. We are happy you gave us some new things to read. Thank you for the books.

*Sincerely,
Terrence*

Dear Kids Need to Read,

Thank you so much for donating the books to our school. We really needed them because we don't have a lot of cool, interesting books like those. I cannot wait to start reading one because they look really great. Thank you again for the wonderful books!

*Sincerely,
Jacob*

[Read more testimonials on our Community Page.](#)

The Auction Block

Kids Need to Read Charity Auctions has been a busy place! It has been a remarkable few months for us. We are thrilled with everyone's enthusiasm and generosity. A big thank you to everyone who has bid, donated or won one of our auctions. Give yourselves a big old pat on the back, because without your support, we would not be able to do what we do!



The big news in the Kids Need to Read auction world is our recent move to eBay. It was a bit rocky at first, but after we worked out a few kinks, we took off running! The move has been a very positive one, and now our auctions reach a lot more people. We could not be happier with the way things are going. Now that our auctions are so popular, we hold two each week!

A few of us attended Phoenix Cactus Comicon 2008 in January. We were fortunate enough to obtain seven boxes worth of donated auction items, and have some very interesting stuff awaiting your bids! Your inner sci-fi geek will have a field day with some of the upcoming collectibles from *Star Trek*, *Star Wars* and *Firefly/Serenity* – all autographed! I know we have a lot of comic book fans out there too, and we have you covered with items from icons like Tom Hodges (author and illustrator of the *MidKnight* series) and Anthony Garcia (author and illustrator of the *Wall of Angels* series) -- and that is just the tip of the iceberg. Of course, we haven't forgotten our book worms! Expect some treats coming up from authors James A. Owen, J. S. Lewis and Derek Benz, just to name a few.

Don't forget to keep an eye out for our auction posts -- you won't want to be left out! Again, we are grateful for your continued support of Kids Need to Read!

Debbie Brown
Auction Coordinator

[Visit KNTR auctions on eBay.](#)

[Read KNTR auction news on our Community Page.](#)

Sci-Fi Fans Support Kids Need to Read

On February 16, 2008, the [NoVA Browncoats Meetup Group](#) had a fan table at the Farpoint 2008 convention. They raffled off various *Firefly/Serenity* themed goodies, including a *Serenity* t-shirt, an Alan Tudyk autograph, the official companion books, a Captain Malcolm Reynolds cover comic and even some handmade "companion" jewelry made by one of their members. The group raised \$140.00 for Kids Need to Read. Additionally, the NoVA Browncoats host another raffle to benefit KNTR at Shore Leave 30 on July 11-13, 2008.

[Sending a Wave](#), the first UK-based Firefly/Serenity podcast, has interviewed Kids Need to Read volunteers in two podcast episodes and most recently KNTR founders PJ Haarsma and Nathan Fillion.

Browncoats attending the Raleigh, NC [Can't Stop the Serenity](#) event will find KNTR postcards in their goody bags!

Thanks to Marco Guerrero of [258 West Authentic](#), folks who generously donated blood during the New York Comic Con on April 18-20, 2008 may have noticed Kids Need to Read postcards in their care packages.

[Team Winchester](#), a *Supernatural* fan group, has adopted Kids Need to Read as their official team charity. They also donated an autographed DVD set of the first season of *Supernatural*, which will be auctioned off through KNTR's eBay store later this year.

Phoenix Cactus Comicon



Five Kids Need to Read volunteers and founder PJ Haarsma attended the Phoenix Cactus Comicon on January 25-27, 2008. The volunteers had great fun meeting a publisher and several of the authors on our book list, our Book Goddess, and our book distributor. Some volunteers handed out KNTR promo cards and buttons on the convention floor while others received generous donations from supportive vendors. When Wil Wheaton (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*) heard about our cause, he didn't think twice before offering to donate and sign his book for KNTR.

KNTR also hosted a panel on Saturday to answer questions about the Foundation and discuss ideas on literacy and fundraising. Because Kids Need to Read is passionate about giving away books, members of our audience received free books.

Several groups held special events to benefit Kids Need to Read. A portion of the money raised during the Phoenix Cactus Comicon will go toward giving books to underfunded schools in Mesa and Tempe, Arizona.

The Dune Sea Garrison of the 501st Stormtroopers hosted a super fabulous USO-style show to benefit KNTR. Thank you so much, Jen LaFortune and the entire Dune Sea Garrison.

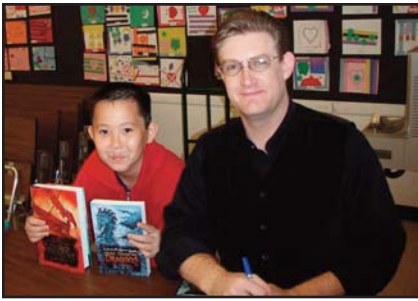
SpazDog Comics conducted a fundraiser for KNTR by pre-selling copies of *Serenity: Better Days* signed by actor Nathan Fillion. The auction continued on eBay and sold out in just two days! SpazDog is contributing the net profits to KNTR!

KNTR would also like to extend huge, appreciative thanks to all of the authors, artists and comic book merchants who generously donated signed items for our upcoming auctions. Thank you Jeremy Bulloch and Peter Mayhew for contributing your signatures as well. All of you will be a part of giving books to those who cannot afford them.

Lastly, a special thank you to Matt Solberg and Linda Zaruches for all your cheerful help!

[Check out our convention and event picture blogs!](#)

Michael's Book Bytes



Kids Need to Read's youngest volunteer is 11-year-old Michael. He came to us through his interest in PJ Haarsma's books and online game. His enthusiasm for reading and cooking is infectious. Not one to just sit around chatting, Michael asked to be put to work immediately. We have given him the assignment to share his views on the books he reads and any literary topics he wishes to cover. We feel it is important to listen to the voice of children. Not stopping there, we insisted that he share his great recipes with us as well. We're not kidding -- the kid can cook!

Recent blogs include interviews with authors James A. Owen (pictured) and Dean Lorey.

We hope you will stop by occasionally to enjoy *Michael's Book Bytes*. Nothing is better than chocolate . . . but this almost is!

[Read Michael's Book Bytes Blog.](#)

New KNTR Merchandise

Help promote literacy at school or at your office with our shiny, new line of mousepads and mugs! While you are there, be sure to check out our complete line of shirts and accessories. The net proceeds from our CafePress store will help us buy more books for struggling schools and libraries. Thanks for shopping!

[Visit KNTR's CafePress Store!](#)

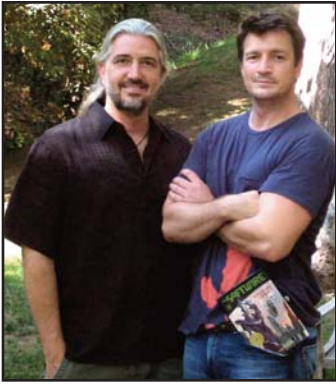


A Message from Founder PJ Haarsma

I can't believe it's already April. As many of you know, I just took my Christmas tree down. What happened to January, February and March? In fact, what happened to this decade? It seems like just last week I was worried some little chip in my computer was going to bring the world to a crushing halt. Huddled in the corner, sweating the new millennium, I had no idea what the future would hold.

Now -- eight years later -- I've had a child, written four books, built two video games, and met an amazing group of people thanks to the Kids Need to Read Foundation. Everyone has worked so hard and accomplished so much in such a short time that it makes me giddy to think of what we can do together as a group. They say there is power in numbers, but the power is really in the people. I can't wait to see what we're going to do. I know it will be awesome, and I want to thank each and every one of you now for the effort you're going to put forth in the coming months and even years. Thank you.

About The Kids Need to Read Foundation



Kids Need to Read is a literacy foundation established by children's author PJ Haarsma and actor Nathan Fillion. The foundation is supported by a global group of volunteers whose dream is to get more books into the hands of the children who need them.

Kids Need to Read raises money to buy books for under-funded schools and libraries, as well as for organizations who give books to disadvantaged children. Funds are raised through various fundraising events and bi-weekly auctions, which have proven very popular among fans of *Firefly* / *Serenity* and science fiction, as well as literacy advocates. A [CafePress store](#) selling literacy-themed merchandise and "Kindness is a Strength" items helps raise additional funds for Kids Need to Read.

Kids Need to Read donates from an [official book list](#) that includes a variety of well-reviewed books for preschool to teenaged children. The list is carefully structured to appeal to the most reluctant young readers, but contains material for advanced readers as well.

[Learn more about Kids Need to Read!](#)

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www.kidsneedtoread.org

<http://community.kidsneedtoread.org>

www.myspace.com/kidsneedtoread
