

Opportunities with Literacy (OWL) Fest

2024 Project Report

Project Report

2024 OWL Fest



Opportunities
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Governor's Early Literacy Foundation was honored and grateful to partner with the Tennessee Department of Education again this year to present Opportunities with Literacy – OWL Fest, a curated bookstore and shopping experience for 40 schools across Tennessee. OWL Fest was designed to support students enrolled at comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) schools by building their home libraries and encouraging them to continue learning to read and developing their literacy skills.



With
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In September 2024, each school participated in a one-day event during which PreK-5th grade students selected six books each from a broad collection of high-quality, high-interest, grade-appropriate titles, at no cost to them. All schools will receive school level resources in the form of mobile libraries fitted with a wide range of subject matter to be shared amongst the school community.



Literacy
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OWL Fest's design is based on literacy research. Only 40% of Tennessee 3rd graders read proficiently. A two-decade long study found that the presence of a home library increases children's academic success, vocabulary development, attention, and job attainment. Children with as few as 25 books in the home complete an average of two more years of schooling than those with no books. Additionally, research from the Scholastic Kids & Family Reading Report™: 8th Edition shows most children (93%) are more likely to finish reading books that they have selected themselves and that those are often their favorite books (92%), demonstrating that the student-selection feature of OWL Fest is critical to inspiring reading motivation.

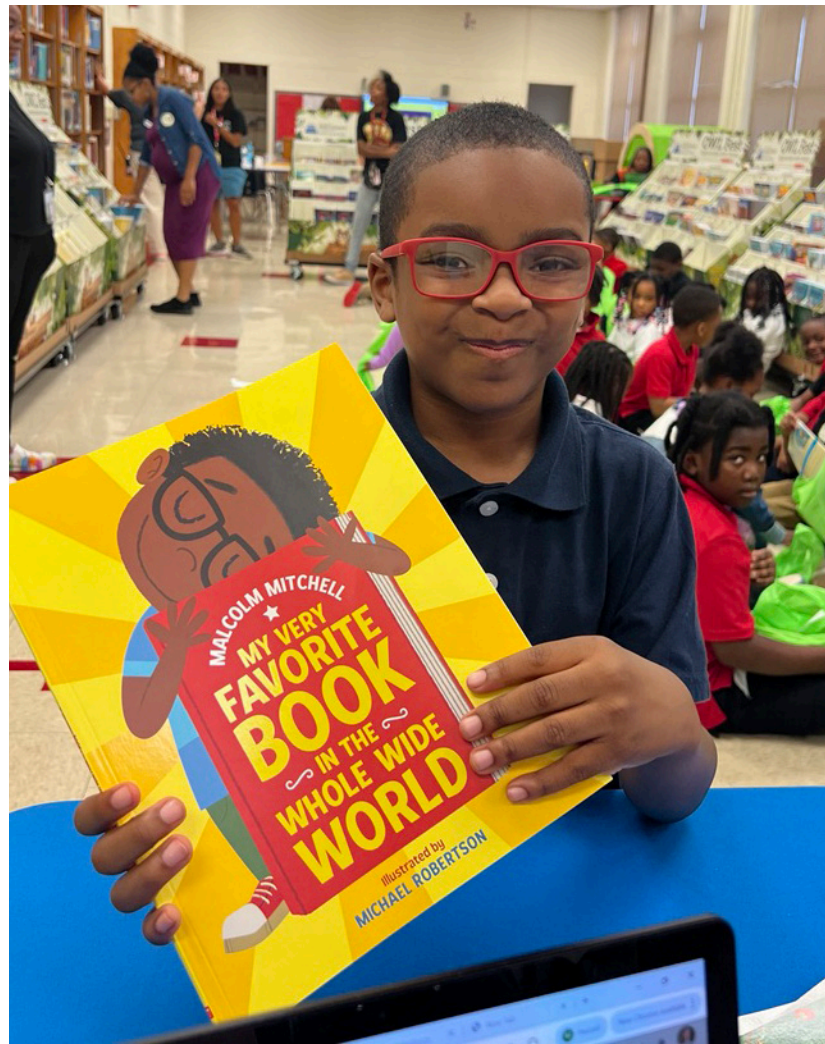
The initiative continues to be met with incredible support and enthusiasm from students, educators, school/district leaders, and the community at large. It exemplifies the power of books to both inspire and celebrate a love for reading.



"We truly appreciate you all for pouring into our students the love of reading. Our students truly enjoyed receiving the books and your support in helping to grow their libraries at home."

Tiffany Rhodes

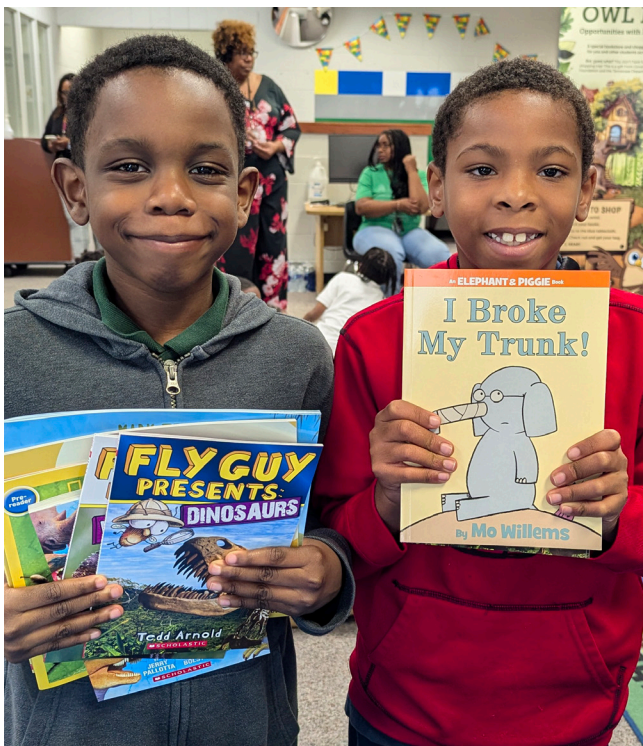
Community Achieves Site Manager
Robert Churchwell Museum Magnet Elementary



[CLICK TO WATCH
STUDENT THANK YOU](#)

"Thank you! OWL Fest was amazing!"

Zonja M. Glover
Hanley Elementary School Principal



"We are excited about this opportunity to provide all of our students with books to ensure that the love of literature continues beyond this school building and into the home."

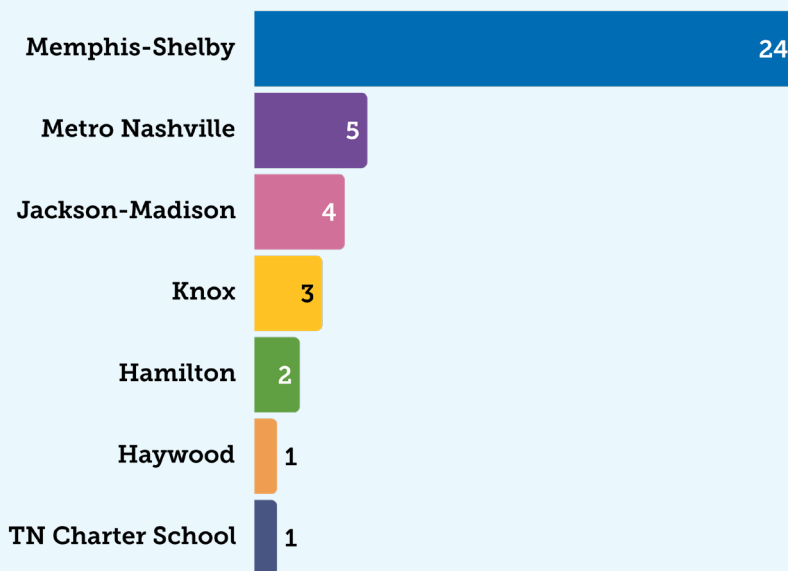
William Smith
Lonsdale Elementary School Principal



By the Numbers



40 Priority Schools



"The glow on our students' faces as they chose books that they connected with and could take home as their own was unmatched. We are so grateful to partner with GELF and OWL Fest this year again!"

Cori Beach

K-2 Instructional Coach
Memphis Delta Preparatory School

74,850 Books

Selected by Children

Top 5 Titles Selected:

- 1 *Pete the Cat and the Cool Caterpillar* by James Dean
- 2 *I Got the Rhythm* by Connie Schofield-Morrison
- 3 *Pizza Shark: A Fin-tastic Feast* by Mike Lowery
- 4 *Be an Expert!™: Dinosaurs* by Erin Kelly
- 5 *Fly Guy's Big Family* by Tedd Arnold

900 Educators Served

16,463 Students Served

- 1,389 Pre-K
- 2,536 Kindergarten
- 2,555 1st Grade
- 2,573 2nd Grade
- 2,434 3rd Grade
- 2,322 4th Grade
- 2,654 5th Grade



Community Involvement

Press Involvement

- More than **5.2M** total potential audience
- **9** major media outlets & TV stations
- **80%** of media-designated events had press attendance

Community Involvement

- **201** volunteers
- **45** organizations who sent volunteers



"Four decades of research with children of all ages, in varied socioeconomic and cultural groups, reveal that access to books in the home is one of the strongest predictors of educational achievement. Scholastic is proud to work with GELF and the Tennessee Department of Education to ensure the students of Tennessee have access to books at home that not only unlock the power and joy of reading, but support them academically."

Amanda Alexander

Chief Academic Officer at Scholastic





Thank you TDOE!

Governor's Early Literacy Foundation is deeply grateful to the Tennessee Department of Education for their ongoing support and partnership around OWL Fest. This innovative program provides high-quality books and literacy resources to schools in need. This initiative has inspired both students and adults, highlighting the crucial link between foundational literacy, the motivation to read, and academic success. Governor's Early Literacy Foundation and our partners look forward to the opportunity to implement and expand OWL Fest in the future, with the aim to make it an annual program.

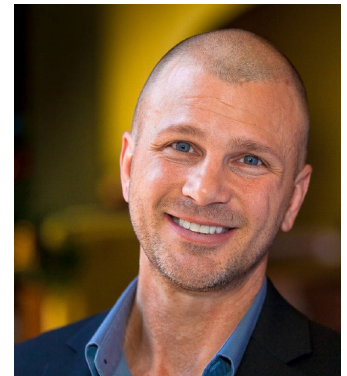
"We know reading on grade level is the cornerstone of a child's education and the basis of their postsecondary success. Thanks to partners like GELF and Scholastic, students and teachers across the state have a very special opportunity at OWL Fest to have access to books and resources for the classroom for free."

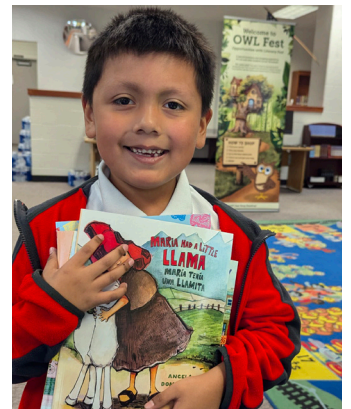
Lizzette Reynolds
Commissioner of Education



"OWL Fest brings the joy and excitement of choosing your own books directly to students who may not have this opportunity otherwise. It's not just about providing books - it's about giving kids a love of reading and ownership of their literacy journey, ultimately, setting them on a path for future success."

James Pond
President, Governor's Early Literacy Foundation





"These books are amazing!"

Student
Jones Elementary School





"To see the looks of awe on each child's face when they realized they would be able to choose any books they wanted to read and take them home was a priceless moment in this school year. It is my hope that this type of experience can be continued and expanded, so more children can be a part of this."

Jami Fowler-White
Scenic Hills Elementary School Principal

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