



For immediate release

**INDIGO DONATIONS TOP \$6 MILLION TO HIGH-NEEDS SCHOOLS IN CANADA
- First year "graduating" schools demonstrate impact of funding on literacy -**

Toronto, ON - May 15, 2008 - Today, the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation committed another \$1.5 million to high-needs elementary schools totaling \$6 million in funding to date. Twenty elementary schools across Canada will receive grants of up to \$160,000 over three years.

"The Indigo Love of Reading Foundation focuses attention on Canada's most valuable resource - our children," said Heather Reisman, CEO of Indigo Books & Music Inc. "By providing schools with funding for books we are, in a small way, helping to brighten the future of young children and mitigate the literacy crisis in Canada. In addition to our direct work with schools, we remain committed to encouraging Provincial Governments across Canada to follow the Ontario Government's lead to invest more boldly in school libraries and librarians."

Early Love of Reading Results

A focus on literacy and enriched libraries produces results. Mary Street School in Oshawa, Ontario, achieved tremendous results over the past three years, including dramatically improved reading levels from grades 1 through 8. Prior to the grant, no students at the grade 2 level were assessed as being able to read at the standardized levels for their grade. Now over 35 per cent of students are reading at standardized levels. Grades 7 and 8 were previously struggling to read at Level 1 and now 78 per cent of students' reading skills have significantly improved, reaching Levels 2 and 3 – the latter considered the provincial standard.

At St. Francis of Assisi in Edmonton, Alberta, overall academic performance improved significantly. St. Francis initially ranked last out of 705 Alberta schools. After one year, this school moved up to a ranking of 578, garnering a nomination for the Garfield Weston Award in the area of Academic Performance and Improvement.

King Edward Public School in Kitchener, Ontario, demonstrated a marked improvement with just 32 per cent of students reading at standard grade 3 reading levels prior to receiving their grant. In their second year of the Love of Reading program, 59 per cent of students scored above or at provincial reading standards for grade 3.

Important Statistics

- A 1 per cent increase in literacy adds \$18.4 billion to our economy.^[1]
- In 1970 public schools received the equivalent of three new books per child per year. Today it is less than one third of a book.
- 87 per cent of Canadian public schools lack a working library with a full-time librarian.^[2]
- 42 per cent of Canadian adults lack basic literacy skills.^[3]
- 80 per cent of people who end up in jail are functionally illiterate.^[4]

2008 Love of Reading Recipients

This year, the following 20 schools will receive funding from the 2008 Indigo Love of Reading Foundation.

Excerpts from the grant recipient calls can be found online at

<http://www.loveofreading.org/code/navigate.asp?id=81>.

British Columbia:

Lena Shaw Elementary School, Surrey
Conrad Street Elementary School, Prince Rupert

Quebec:

Orchard Elementary, LaSalle
Shigawake Port Daniel School, Shigawake

Alberta:

Parkdale School, Edmonton
Prince Charles Elementary School, Edmonton

New Brunswick:

Elsipogtog First Nation School, Elsipogtog

Saskatchewan:

Glen Elm School, Regina

Prince Edward Island:

Prince Street Elementary School,
Charlottetown
Belfast Consolidated School, Belle River

Manitoba:

North Memorial School, Portage la Prairie
Kelsey Community School, The Pas
Plum Coulee Elementary School, Plum Coulee

Nova Scotia:

South Centennial Elementary School,
Yarmouth

Northwest Territories:

Sir Alexander Mackenzie School, Inuvik

Newfoundland:

Woodland Primary, Grand Falls-Windsor

Ontario:

Roxborough Park Public School,, Hamilton
Abe Scatch Memorial School, Poplar Hill
Fenelon Township Public School, Cameron
Alexander Muir / Gladstone, Toronto

To be considered for an Indigo Love of Reading Foundation grant, elementary schools must demonstrate that they are a high-needs institution and show a commitment to an environment where literacy is a main focus. Schools can apply for grants from the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation by downloading an application at www.loveofreading.org. A new application will be available for download in September.

About the Love of Reading Foundation and Indigo Books & Music Inc.

The Indigo Love of Reading Foundation is a fully chartered charitable foundation whose goal is to improve the literacy and opportunity of children in high needs schools. The Foundation annually grants \$1.5 million dollars to selected elementary schools across the country. Funding for the Foundation comes 2/3 from Indigo and 1/3 from Indigo customers. This year The Love of Reading Foundation was pleased to receive a donation from Random House of Canada.

Indigo Books and Music Inc. is a Canadian company and the largest book retailer in Canada, operating bookstores in all provinces under the names Indigo Books and Music, Chapters, and Coles. Indigo operates chapters.indigo.ca, an online retailer of books, music, videos, and DVDs. It is a publicly traded company listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange under the stock symbol IDG.

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If you are interested in coordinating an interview with an Indigo Love of Reading Foundation representative or a principal from one of the schools selected to receive a grant, please contact:

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^[1] Stats Canada study June 22, 2004 (Coulombe & Tremblay and Marchand, Department of Economics, University of Ottawa)

^[2] "Writing on the Wall", Love of Reading Fund production, 2007

^[3] Statistics Canada International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey / IALS, 2003

^[4] Dr. Ann Curry report on Canadian Federal Prison Libraries 2003 Page 26 / Correction Service Canada, Education and Employment Programs January 28, 2003