

## Book Harvest Supports “Let Freedom Read!”

*Statement Issued in Conjunction with 2023 Banned Books Week*

At the launch of Banned Books Week 2023 (October 1 -7), Book Harvest joins the [American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom](#) and the dozens of national organizations coming together to lift up our shared clarion call: “Let Freedom Read!”

Book Harvest’s mission is to foster every child’s lifelong love of reading and learning by providing an abundance of books and ongoing literacy support to children and families, starting at birth. Our work is fueled by our belief in the transformative power of books to build brains, spark imagination, foster joy and belonging, and contribute to healthy communities in which every child can flourish.

Book Harvest is devoted to providing unfettered access to an abundance of books for children and families everywhere they go – in laundromats and doctors’ offices, at parks, and in other public gathering locations. When children and families have the opportunity to select their own books and build home libraries, they develop a self-determined habit of shared reading that ensures a lifetime of literacy, an identity as a reader, and a love of reading.

Book Harvest is deeply troubled by the recent wave of book bans and challenges to book access in public schools and libraries in our home state of North Carolina and across the country. These restrictions – especially those that limit access to books for children by and/or about people of color and LGBTQIA+ communities – are a perilous threat to diverse perspectives and ideas, and they stifle the free exchange of knowledge.

Book Harvest joins the [American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom](#) and the dozens of national organizations coming together to lift up our shared clarion call: Let Freedom Read! We are active members of the [Diverse Books for All Coalition](#) and [Unite Against Book Ban Campaign](#).

Book Harvest is resolute in our commitment to everyone’s right to read, and to read what they want. We stand by these essential principles that guide our work:

- We believe that abundant access to diverse and inclusive children’s books plays an essential role in healthy childhood development, flourishing communities, and a thriving democracy.
- We believe books should serve as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors<sup>1</sup> so that children see themselves and worlds beyond their own in the stories they read; this expansive view equips them to build self-confidence, empathy, and understanding.
- We celebrate families reading and learning together, and we trust every parent’s ability to make the best decisions for their own children.

Book Harvest provides books for every child, support for every parent, and literacy for every community. With our valued partners in North Carolina and across the United States, we champion the transformative power of books and the value of a diverse literary landscape, one in which every child, young person, and adult has the opportunity to learn, grow, and experience the immense joy of books, stories, words, and ideas from a rich and diverse tapestry of perspectives and identities.

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<sup>1</sup> Rudine Sims Bishop, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors,” *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom* 6, no. 3 (Summer 1990).