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**First Book and Rise Up Foundation to Donate \$100,000 for New Books and Disaster Recovery Research to Schools Devastated by Hurricane Harvey**

WASHINGTON and ORANGE, Calif. (April 29, 2019)— First Book, the nonprofit social enterprise committed to equal access to quality education, and Rise Up Foundation, author Alane Adams' nonprofit organization that promotes literacy in low-income communities, are partnering to bring \$70,000 in new books this week to Houston-area schools still recovering from Hurricane Harvey, with an additional \$30,000 for disaster recovery research. Adams is donating more than 8,000 of her own books, in addition to hosting school-wide assemblies at 13 Houston-area schools that were impacted by Hurricane Harvey on the importance of reading and writing, and providing funds to conduct focus groups to better understand the connection between disaster relief, books, reading, and social and emotional learning.

The distribution, which is expected to yield more than 35,000 books for school libraries and classrooms, is part of a broader initiative to restore disaster-affected schools. The partnership already distributed more than 11,600 books to 12 schools Lake County, Calif., devastated by last year's Mendocino Complex Fire.

"We can't allow our teachers or our children to be among the collateral damage of these already-devastating events," said Kyle Zimmer, First Book president, CEO, and co-founder. "Schools are at the heart of every community; they restore a sense of routine and comfort. We need to ensure educators have everything they need to teach, and kids have everything they need to learn, not only for the sake of quality education, but for the sake of restoring communities."

From Hurricane Katrina to catastrophic floods, First Book has distributed more than 5 million books to educators, kids, and families affected by disasters, working with first responders, communities, schools, and libraries to get the right resources in the right hands at the right time.

"Natural disasters cause not only financial devastation to communities but take a toll on the emotional well-being of its youngest citizens," said Alane Adams, Rise Up Foundation founder. "The ability to put new books into the hands of children affected by these disasters is a way to help them return to a sense of normalcy and remind them that there is still magic in the world."

"What is so smart and effective about Alane Adams generous gift is that she is putting the choice of the books directly into the hands of classroom teachers and school librarians to pick books that

best needs our students needs and support high-quality teaching and learning in Houston public schools,” said Zeph Capo, Houston Federation of Teachers president.

Books and resources are critical, but scarce, for kids in need. Access to adequate resources is one of the greatest contributors to educational inequality in the United States, but research has identified vast ‘book deserts’ concentrated in low-income communities across the U.S.—with one community having only a single book to be shared among as many as 830 children.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, in a poll of the First Book network, 82 percent of respondents reported that without First Book their children would have very few or no new books.

### **About First Book**

First Book believes education offers children in need the best path out of poverty. Through a sustainable, market-driven model, First Book breaks down barriers to quality education by making new, high-quality books and educational resources, including sports equipment, winter coats, snacks, and more, affordable to its member network of more than 400,000 registered educators who exclusively serve kids in need. Since 1992, First Book has distributed more learning materials than any other program of its kind: 175 million books and educational resources, worth more than \$1.5 billion, reaching more than 5 million children annually.

First Book also expands the breadth and depth of the education field through a family of social enterprises, including First Book Research & Insights, its proprietary research initiative, and the First Book Accelerator, which brings best-in-class research to the classroom via relevant, usable educator resources.

Eligible educators, librarians, providers, and others serving children in need can sign up at [firstbook.org/omgbooks](https://firstbook.org/omgbooks). For more information, please visit [firstbook.org](https://firstbook.org) or follow the latest news on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

### **About Rise Up Foundation**

Rise Up Foundation strives to improve the lives of children and families living in poverty and difficult circumstances. Rise Up supports literacy projects as a path toward improving the future prospects of children in underserved communities by making book donations, providing classroom support, and grant-making. In addition to literacy efforts, Rise Up works with organizations committed to defining and solving the problems that chronic poverty brings to children and their communities. For more information, visit <https://riseupfoundation.org> or follow on Facebook [@Rise.Up.Foundation](#) and on Twitter [@RiseUpFdn](#).

### **About Alane Adams**

Alane Adams is an award-winning trans media author, former professor, and literacy advocate. She is the author of the *Legends of Orkney* and *Witches of Orkney* fantasy mythology series for tweens, and *The Coal Thief*, *The Egg Thief*, *The Santa Thief*, and *The Circus Thief* picture books for early-grade readers. She is also the founder of Rise Up Foundation. She lives in Southern

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Susan B. Neuman, Naomi Moland. “Book Deserts.” *Urban Education*, 2016. DOI: [10.1177/0042085916654525](https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916654525)

California. For more information, visit <https://alaneadams.com> or follow Alane on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#): @AlaneAdamsBooks.