

First Book

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First Book Kicks Off Lion-Sized Book Giveaway to Needy San Antonio Kids at Witte Museum Oct. 7

Sports community and literacy groups double-team the reading challenge

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (October 6, 2003) – First Book-San Antonio is kicking off a 7,000 book giveaway at the Witte Museum on Tuesday October 7 at 3:30 pm. Two hundred excited elementary school children from reading programs throughout the area will attend and get free copies of award-winning illustrated books. The kickoff includes a read-aloud with the book's colorful illustrations projected on a screen. The San Antonio sports community will be on hand to enforce the message that reading, like sports, takes practice and is fun. Phyllis Sance, the San Antonio high school coaching legend now with the city school district, will join Clarissa Davis-Wrightsil, Chief Operating Officer of the Silver Stars and others from the Spurs organization.

Afterwards, each child will personally receive a bilingual English-Spanish edition of the highly acclaimed tale *The Lion Who Saw Himself in the Water*, written by Idries Shah, illustrated by Ingrid Rodriguez and published by Hoopoe Books. The rest of the bilingual books in the donation will be distributed to children in the community over the next several weeks through local literacy programs run by Avance, Making Connections, the City of San Antonio Parks & Recreation, the Witte Museum, the San Antonio Archdiocese and the San Antonio public schools.

National studies show that quality illustrated books, which are key to stimulating interest in reading at an early age, are too expensive for most lower-income families.

The book giveaway is sponsored by First Book, a national nonprofit organization that works with existing literacy programs to distribute new books to low-income children, and Hoopoe Books, which publishes traditional children's stories from Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Middle East that help teach thinking skills.

"*The Lion Who Saw Himself in the Water* is a real treasure, and we're thrilled to be able to give it to San Antonio's children," says KLRN vice president for education Mary Rich, chairperson of First Book San Antonio. "These kids have so little access to books, and many have never owned one before. This will help them know the magic of reading, which is key to a child's future, and will also let them share it with their families at home."

About First Book

First Book is a national nonprofit organization with a single mission: to give children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. In neighborhoods across the country, First Book Advisory Boards unite leaders from all sectors of the community to provide books to children in literacy programs, shelters for battered children, housing project initiatives, soup kitchens, after-school programs and other community-based efforts reaching children living at or below the poverty line. In the last two years alone, First Book has provided almost 15 million new books to children in need in hundreds of communities nationwide. For more information about First Book, or to make a donation to help children in need, please visit www.firstbook.org.

Contact Mary Rich, Vice President of Education, KLRN San Antonio, 210-270-9000.

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