



book harvest

## Book Harvest's Rapid Response Summer Strategy: Keeping Learning Alive During COVID

*"COVID-related school and library closures have made the imperative to get books into the hands of kids across Durham more important than ever."*

--Greg Mitchell, Club Boulevard Elementary School Assistant Principal

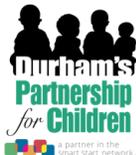
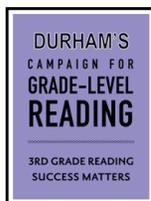
*"We both can go wherever we like in the world just by reading books."*

--Mom of an eight-year-old, reflecting on their pandemic experience

Book Harvest's Rapid Response Summer Strategy tackles the unprecedented suspension of in-school learning that children are facing in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to books is fundamental to keeping learning alive for every child – for maintaining and improving reading skills, for finding comfort in a bedtime story, for fueling imaginations during the longer-than-ever time away from school.

Book provision is at the core of Book Harvest's work; we have provided more than 1.3 million books to North Carolina children since our launch in 2011. Now more than ever, we are committed to ensuring that every child has bountiful access to books to keep learning alive. Our ambitious goal is to provide **75,000 books** to Durham children ages 0 to 18 from April 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

Book Harvest's Rapid Response Summer Strategy launched on June 1, 2020. Operating from a temporary 6,000 square foot storefront adjacent to the Book Harvest headquarters at 2501 University Drive in Durham's Rockwood Shopping Center, this Durham-wide initiative is a collaboration with partners that include:



Powered by book donors and volunteers, the Rapid Response Summer Strategy will ensure **the safe and plentiful provision of books to local children throughout the summer.**

A team of Book Harvest staff and volunteers – all trained in safety protocols -- will implement the Rapid Response. Book Harvest teammates will be recognized throughout the community by their bright orange masks, caps, and vests. Brightly colored branded bags will hold the books being made available to thousands of children throughout the summer and beyond. These bags will also include critical literacy and learning information for parents about such resources as Pre-K applications and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library; and they will include a survey link so that parents can provide feedback and suggestions to Rapid Response.

Below are key Rapid Response Summer Strategy activities and dates – all subject to change depending on circumstances.

**Monday, June 1: Rapid Response Center opens at 2501 University Drive, Durham (adjacent to Book Harvest's HQ).**

All-call for donations of new and gently used children's books to be left in the contactless book bin outside our HQ at 2501 University Drive, Durham. Help us meet our goal of providing 75,000 books by bringing us your book donations!

**Monday, June 8: [Well Fed, Well Read](#) summer program launches.**

Rapid Response coordinates with Durham Public Schools' nutrition program to provide bags of age-appropriate books that are included with the meals being provided to children at 24 locations throughout our community. This is a continuation of our Well Fed, Well Read collaboration with Durham FEAST to combine books with food for families in the month of May.

**Wednesday, July 1: Grab and Go Books kicks off at Rockwood Shopping Center and expands to select locations throughout Durham.**

Bags of age-appropriate books are available, via drive-up contactless pickup, for families at our Rapid Response Center next to Book Harvest headquarters at 2501 University Drive in Durham. Also under development: a plan to collaborate with our community partners to add bags of Grab and Go books to existing summer programs. Partners may include Durham County, Durham's Partnership for Children, Durham Children's Initiative, Durham Literacy Center, Durham Housing Authority, apartment complexes, and laundromats.

Book Harvest will chart a course for a fall Rapid Response strategy as both community needs and the as-yet-unknown limitations of COVID emerge throughout the summer. We aspire to keep our Rapid Response going for as long as children and families face educational hardships related to the pandemic. *We are deeply grateful to all our partners who make this work possible – including our community of book donors, financial donors, and volunteers.*

This is the work Book Harvest does best – and for which we have earned a reputation of excellence – in Durham, in North Carolina, and around the country. Book provision and parent engagement are at the heart of who we are. Nurturing and nourishing early language development, childhood literacy, and parent power are what define our work. Embedding a love for reading and learning from birth is our goal – and we hold fast to the belief that this is the key to disrupting the entrenched cycles of generational poverty – the ambitious vision we have for every child in our midst.

To learn more about Book Harvest or to see up-to-date information on our COVID response, visit [www.bookharvestnc.org](http://www.bookharvestnc.org).

