



book harvest

## Well Fed, Well Read: Keeping Learning Alive During Summer 2020

*“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

### **Background:**

Parents and educators alike have long mobilized to combat learning loss during the summer, when time away from the classroom poses a risk to children’s educational progress that is especially pronounced among children from low-income households.

In the spring of 2020, the toll that summer takes on learning started a full three months earlier than in normal years, as Covid-related school closures across the country disrupted children’s education. As with summer learning loss, the effects of this extended time away from formal learning were far more devastating for vulnerable children. *The need to keep learning alive at this challenging time is urgent.*

Book Harvest, which has provided more than 1.3 million books and a rich variety of literacy support to children and families in central North Carolina since 2011, is activating its networks to get books into the hands of kids *now*, when they need them most. With schools shuttered, reaching children with books through school is not an option, leaving us to identify alternate mechanisms to get books into the hands and homes of children.

In May 2020, we launched **Well Fed, Well Read** to answer the call and to ensure that children’s brains are nourished along with their bodies.

Well Fed, Well Read ensures **the safe and plentiful provision of books to local children who receive meals through nutrition programs.** We partner 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.

Bundling books with food for kids is a practice we hope to continue in post-pandemic times, since we know that children whose families seek out nutrition programs are less likely to be growing up in book-rich homes. It doesn’t have to be this way.

Book Harvest aspires to keep this book provision in partnership with meal programs going for as long as children and families can benefit. *We are deeply grateful to all our partners who make this work possible – including our community of book donors, financial donors, school partners, and volunteers.*



To learn more about Book Harvest and bringing Well Fed, Well Read to your community, visit [www.bookharvestnc.org](http://www.bookharvestnc.org) or contact Book Harvest Executive Director Ginger Young, [ginger@bookharvestnc.org](mailto:ginger@bookharvestnc.org).