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Community Gives Generously to BankRI Children’s Book Drive, Putting 8,000+ Free Books into the Hands of Local Children

14th annual collection to benefit Books Are Wings is among the bank’s largest ever

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Throughout the month of March, the community rallied around Bank Rhode Island’s (BankRI) annual Children’s Book Drive, leading to a significant donation of books to a local nonprofit. In total, 8,252 books were collected to benefit [Books Are Wings](#) and will support literacy programs the organization brings to schools, students, and the community.

“There’s nothing small about collecting more than eight thousand books in just four weeks – it’s a tremendous gesture of kindness from our community,” said Will Tsonos, President and CEO of BankRI. “Reading is the foundational building block of learning. Thanks to the success of the drive, thousands of local children will be delivered free books for their reading enjoyment and to build their own libraries.”

This was the 14th year that BankRI has partnered with Books Are Wings to collect new and gently used books in support of its programs. The BankRI drive has become one of the largest annual collections for the organization, whose literacy work supports young readers across Rhode Island. Books Are Wings offers unique, youth-centered programs and education-based partnerships that foster a love of learning.

BankRI’s drive coincided with March as National Reading Month and all 22 of its branches participated in the effort. A number of locations saw a tremendous response, with the Wakefield branch leading the way with 2,079 books collected. Highland Avenue in East Providence came in at 1,424, and both the Bank’s Jefferson Boulevard and Turks Head branches each topped 500. In Smithfield, local preschool teacher Cassie Macdonald donated more than 100 books after refreshing her classroom library, giving new life to some of her students’ old favorites.

“We are so appreciative of the continued support of BankRI, their staff, and their customers,” said Jennifer Smith, Ed.M., Executive Director of Books Are Wings. “This book donation has a huge impact on our work and at a time of year when we need books the most. It’s truly amazing what can happen when so many people come together to support children’s literacy through book ownership.”

All of the donated books have been sorted, packaged, and delivered to Books Are Wings’ Pawtucket offices. The organization will soon begin to distribute them to kids around the state and in preparation for summer learning programs. Each year, Books Are Wings puts an average of 60,000 free books in the hands of local schoolchildren.

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About Bank Rhode Island

Bank Rhode Island, a wholly owned subsidiary of Brookline Bancorp, Inc. (NASDAQ:BRKL), is a full-service, FDIC-insured financial institution headquartered in Providence, Rhode Island. The bank operates 22 branches and more than 30 ATMs throughout Providence, Kent, Newport and Washington Counties. For more information, visit www.bankri.com.