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Influx of Donated Books Helps Books Are Wings Ready to Support 'New' Summer Learning Programs

BankRI's annual drive results in 1,618 books when organization needs them most

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Despite the impact of the coronavirus on its branch hours and operations, **Bank Rhode Island (BankRI)** collected 1,618 books for Books Are Wings (BAW) during its abbreviated annual drive this spring. The donated books are now heading to the Pawtucket-based nonprofit at a time when their inventory is low and they're gearing up to support "new" summer learning efforts in light of the pandemic.

"Considering how all of us have been affected by the health crisis, both at home and at work, it is tremendous to see the number of books our community and staff donated in just over half the time," said Mark J. Meiklejohn, President and CEO, BankRI. "Although these remain challenging times, we're happy to be able to support Books Are Wings and the creative ways they're helping kids read during the summer."

BankRI launched its collection on March 2 at all twenty branch locations and also its Lincoln Operations Center. Traditionally a month-long effort, COVID-19 cut the annual book drive short. The books were recently transported to the BAW office where they will be quarantined before being sorted by volunteers and prepped for use.

"This is the first wave of donated books we've received since the pandemic began and since the state began reopening in phases," said Jocelynn White, Executive Director of Books Are Wings. "We've distributed thousands of books over the past few months; books we already had on-hand, and that's depleted our inventory. It's really important for us to get these books now."

With summer learning programs preparing to get started in the coming weeks, and that they'll look different than in the past, BAW will use the newly donated books to support literacy efforts in high-need communities. For in-person programs, *Grab and Go* will provide books for children to choose from and keep, along with each receiving a special 'read-aloud' book. Each Wednesday, BAW staff will host a virtual read-aloud on Facebook Live, encouraging children to follow along. BAW is also inviting cities, towns, and community centers to request books to accompany any summer food distribution at a meal site.

Books Are Wings is in need of additional books for the summer and is now able to collect books from the community on an appointment only basis. Visit BooksAreWings.org or email Jocelynn White at jwhite@booksarewings.org to learn more or to help.

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 20 branches and more than 40 ATMs throughout Providence, Kent, Newport and Washington Counties. For more information, visit www.bankri.com. You can also find BankRI on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/bankri).

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