



**BankRI Launches Book Drive throughout Month of March in Support of Books Are Wings**  
*Annual Collection Helps Nonprofit Put Free Books in the Hands of Rhode Island Children*

**PROVIDENCE, R.I.** – Throughout the month of March, **Bank Rhode Island (BankRI)** is hosting a book drive in each of its 19 branches in partnership with Books Are Wings, offering members of the community a convenient way to support literacy gains among Rhode Island children by making a donation of new and gently used books.

This year’s collection marks the Bank’s 5<sup>th</sup> annual partnership with Books Are Wings, a local nonprofit that works to put free books in the hands of children in some of Rhode Island’s neediest communities. Last year’s effort generated more than 2,000 books, which were distributed to students in Central Falls, helping Books Are Wings expand its offerings to include an intensive six-week literacy program for children with the greatest need. According to Rhode Island Kids Count, 56 percent of Central Falls fourth graders are not proficient in reading.

BankRI is hoping to exceed last year’s results, setting a goal of collecting 2,500 books in 2015.

“The reading proficiency gap in Rhode Island between low-income students and their more affluent peers is not only well-documented, it’s troubling,” said Patricia O’Donnell-Saracino, Vice President of Community Relations for BankRI. “At BankRI, this drive is something that we are entirely committed to and has become an effort our customers and staff look forward to being a part of each year—we all want to help children develop a love of reading at a young age, and this collection is a positive step in achieving that goal.”

In addition to hosting its month-long book drive, BankRI has also awarded a \$2,000 grant to Books Are Wings. The funds will be used to provide literacy supplies to 650 Central Falls students and the distribution of an additional 1,300 books through a School Book Party and Early Learning Book Party organized by Books Are Wings.

To find the BankRI branch closest to you, please visit [www.BANKRHODEISLAND.com](http://www.BANKRHODEISLAND.com). For more information on Books Are Wings, visit [www.BooksAreWings.org](http://www.BooksAreWings.org).

**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 now operates 19 branches and more than 60 ATMs throughout Providence, Kent and Washington Counties. For more information, visit [www.BANKRHODEISLAND.com](http://www.BANKRHODEISLAND.com)

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