



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community Embraces BankRI Collection, Leading to 7,078 Children’s Books for Books Are Wings

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Bank Rhode Island (BankRI) recently wrapped up its annual children’s book drive to benefit Books Are Wings. During March, the bank collected 7,078 books through its 20 branches, corporate office, and operations center, making 2021 BankRI’s most successful book drive.

“We’ve always known our community to be very generous, and this year’s collection demonstrates just how much people want to go above and beyond when there’s an opportunity to help others, especially children,” said Mark J. Meiklejohn, BankRI’s President and CEO. “Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped to make this our best book drive ever.”

For 11 years, BankRI has partnered with Books Are Wings in support of the organization’s mission to put free books in the hands of Rhode Island children. This year’s collection offered both drop-off and virtual donation options. Along with contactless collection bins placed in its branch foyers, BankRI encouraged virtual participation through an online “Wish List” of titles curated by Books Are Wings.

“We had wonderful support from young people this year,” added Patricia O’Donnell-Saracino, VP of Community Relations for BankRI, “from children who cleaned out their bookcases to share with others to students fulfilling their community service hours.”

Spanning from Woonsocket to Middletown, members of the community made a number of sizable donations. Tyius Tate, a 7th grader at Western Hills Middle School in Cranston, donated 189 books, while many customers dropped off significant donations to their local branch. In Wakefield, Robin and Thomas Walsh contributed five large boxes, helping the branch lead the effort with a total of 721 books collected.

“This year, in particular, BankRI and their customers went the extra mile in support of a book drive that is so important to the children we help, especially right now,” said Jocelynn White, Executive Director of Books Are Wings. “We are so thrilled by the amazing books donated and the opportunity to ensure children in Rhode Island have access to books no matter the circumstances.”

The books collected will support a range of Books Are Wings programs and reach children throughout the state. Books will be distributed to each child attending Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School in Providence, and will also benefit the organization’s *Book Bag Project* – an effort created to ensure children could still access books when schools and libraries are closed. Through the *Book Bag Project*, Books Are Wings safely distributes books to families through food pantries and meal sites. Additionally, the organization will provide books to students prior to summer vacation through its school partnerships.

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](#).

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