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TODAY: Statewide Children’s Book Drive Begins at all BankRI Branches

The month-long collection will support Books Are Wings school and community programs that put free books in the hands of local kids

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Coinciding with the start of National Reading Month, Bank Rhode Island (BankRI) today is kicking off its annual Children’s Book Drive at all 22 of its branches in the state. The collection will run the entire month of March, benefiting [Books Are Wings](#) and supporting the programs the organization makes available to schools and their students, and in the community.

This is the 14th year BankRI has partnered with Books Are Wings on what has become one of the largest annual collections for the organization. The Pawtucket-based nonprofit’s mission puts free books in the hands of children with a focus on Rhode Island’s core cities, as well as supporting young readers across the state. It does this work through unique, youth-centered programs and education-based partnerships.

“The relationship between reading proficiently at an early age and future education outcomes is unmistakable – the more a child reads, the more success they’re likely to have in the classroom,” says Will Tsonos, BankRI’s President & CEO. “Every year, the community comes out in force to support our book drive and that generosity makes a real difference for local kids.”

Throughout March, all [BankRI branches](#) feature marked collection bins near their entrance to accept donations of new and gently used children’s books. The book drive also features a way to participate virtually by purchasing a book from the Books Are Wings [Amazon Wish List](#). The Wish List of books requested by the nonprofit can be found on its website at BooksAreWings.org/donate-books.

Books collected during the BankRI drive will support Books Are Wings’ school and community programs, with a focus on the core cities of Pawtucket, Providence, Central Falls, and Woonsocket. In these under-resourced communities, just 18 percent of third graders meet expectations in reading proficiency, according to the 2022 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook. Programs such as ‘Books All Year’ and ‘Read to 100 Challenge’ enable Books Are Wings to have a classroom presence and regularly provide free books to students to read and to keep as part of building their own at-home libraries. Last year, Books Are Wings distributed 57,005 books, nearly 10,000 of which were donated through BankRI’s 2023 effort.

“Everything we do is all about fostering a love of reading, and that begins by ensuring all children have access to books – it’s shocking how many kids grow up in homes without age-appropriate books,” said Jennifer Smith, Executive Director of Books Are Wings. “This BankRI drive is a significant source of books for us, and I want everyone to know that every single book we receive helps to make a difference.”

To find the BankRI branch closest to you and its hours, visit www.BankRI.com/locations.

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