

# The **OCHO** Project: Read for a Need

**O**PPORTUNITIES FOR **C**HILDREN TO **H**ELP **O**THERS

**IMPACT II Disseminator**

**Award-Winning Curriculum and Service-Learning Program**

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# The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need

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# The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need

## Introduction

“No matter how old you are, you are old enough to make a difference in someone else’s life,” said six-year-old Amanda in *The Biggest and Brightest Light: A True Story of the Heart*. My daughter, Amanda, had an experience with her first grade teacher that taught our family the most important lesson of our lives. I was fortunate to recognize that lesson as a “teachable moment.” During the years that my children were growing up, they were involved in community service programs that are now called service-learning projects. These family projects won national awards, and my family was honored with the national Daily Point of Light Award.

I recognized how service-learning was positively affecting every member of my family. What I witnessed was that my children’s self-esteem, personal confidence, and general success grew as they learned to help others. I knew it was important for me to share this most important message. In 2004, *The Biggest and Brightest Light: A True Story of the Heart* was published. My daughter, Amanda, beautifully illustrated the book and Muhammad Ali wrote a moving foreword. This book is now used in elementary schools throughout the country.

I created this service-learning program, The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need, as a vehicle for sharing the life-changing lesson that my family and I learned. Many elementary school teachers now use this book as a foundation for building an interest and an inspiration for their students to look for opportunities to make a difference by addressing literacy issues that students have identified. *OCHO* stands for Opportunities for Children to Help Others. The *OCHO* Project is a not for profit corporation.

Winston Churchill once said, “We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.” This is the quote that hung on our refrigerator door for nearly twenty years. I hope that you will use The *OCHO* Project to engage your students in service-learning. It is my sincere hope that students, educators, families, friends, and neighbors will all grow and gain from the wonderful things to be learned!

Marilyn Perlyn

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(I hope that you will take the time to share your experiences with me so that they may be passed on to others. Please email the number of books your students earned for their book fair so that I can keep track.)

# The OCHO Project: Read for a Need

## About The OCHO Project

“Service-learning,” as described by Learn and Serve America, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, “combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.”

The OCHO Project is a *character based service-learning program* that is dedicated to exposing children to the joys of reading while teaching them that, through reading, they can help others less fortunate than themselves. The prime objective of the program is to have students read not only to expand their own knowledge but also to help “earn” books for their fellow students who have few or no books of their own. Students will “serve” and “learn” while building character values. Students are able to apply knowledge in real world settings by learning both inside and outside of the classroom.

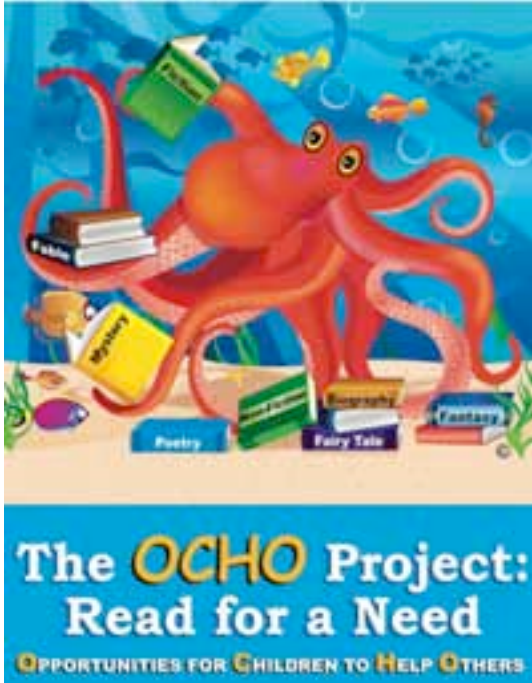
**Objective:** To have students learn about issues of literacy among children and adults, both locally and globally. Students will read eight books and, at the same time, provide books for children who do not have any books at home to read. Students will “serve” a need and “learn” that having books and engaging in reading enhances literary skills. They will also build character values such as empathy, respect, responsibility, honesty, kindness, citizenship, cooperation, fairness, integrity, courage, trustworthiness, perseverance, tolerance, patriotism, and others.

**Goal:** To contribute to the improvement of literacy by understanding the need for it, encourage a love of reading, and teach children that when you help others, you help yourself in the process.

**Method:** Students read eight books and will earn eight OCHO points from academic reading activities. Money to purchase gently used books for the free book fair will be collected as students bring in any change that they can throughout the year and put it in *Small Change for Big Change* collection jars in their classrooms. Students will count the money and the teachers will give the money to the OCHO Club volunteer who will purchase books for the book fair. For every \$8.00, eight gently used books will be sent to the school. Boxes of earned books will be sent to each participating classroom from the used bookstore partner. Additional books will be collected from book drives at school and local community venues.

**Result:** These books will be used to create a book fair at school. Students will participate in organizing the book fair and in providing coupons so that other students may choose books at no cost. Books may also be donated to hospitals, shelter homes, and other places of need. The school and community will participate, as a family, in this effort. Both students and community members will work together to make a difference for others.

## The OCHO Project: Read for a Need Overview



### Opportunities for Children to Help Others

The **OCHO** Project is a service-learning program that is dedicated to exposing children to the joys of reading while teaching them that, through reading, they can help others less fortunate than themselves.

“**Service-learning**,” as described by Learn and Serve America, “combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity changes both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.”

Students “**serve**” and “**learn**” while building character values. Students are then able to apply knowledge in real world settings by learning both inside and outside of the classroom.



## The OCHO Project: Read for a Need Responsibilities of Teachers

### Before the project

Teacher should begin by having students discuss and question issues related to literacy and the reasons that many children and adults either read poorly or do not read at all. Teacher explains what OCHO stands for. The teacher should also explain that, because students have identified a problem related to literacy, The OCHO Project could be a way for them to address the problem.



The OCHO Project is a *service-learning project*.

### After the project

Discuss service-learning and reflection.

Teacher and students discuss which school will benefit from this service. They can decide if they want to serve children in their own school, another school, or perhaps even older people in their community. Teachers will then meet with appropriate school personnel to decide on the date and venue of the book fair.



The teacher will serve as the OCHO class coordinator. Included in these responsibilities are getting students to voice concern related to issues of literacy, handing out various forms, collecting small change from students in collection jars, and linking the project with curriculum. Once the project is completed, the teacher will submit an order form to the OCHO Club volunteer with the teacher's name, grade, students' names, and the amount of money collected by the class.

**Teachers, media specialists, and students can work together to sort books by genre for the book fair.**

# The OCHO Project: Read for a Need Responsibilities of Students

**Students should identify their interests and talents to see what their role will be in the investigation and research of literacy issues in their community. Information can be gathered from interviews, the Internet, media, or documented research. The learning that takes place should be linked to the students' academic curriculum. Students should have voice and choice in the planning of The OCHO Project and how it will be carried out. It is in reflection that students communicate their feelings on what they did, whom they helped, the impact it made, and how it made them feel. A class discussion of character traits demonstrated from the project is a wonderful addition to the reflection process.**

Each child will be given a **Student Agreement Form** to sign and a **Student Letter to Community Members** explaining the project to family and community members. Students will each read eight books, earn eight OCHO points through reading activities linked to curriculum, and will bring in small change for the collection jar in their classroom. They will be asked to share with family and members of the community what they are doing and why it is important for both themselves and others.

**Students use donated books from the OCHO Club to create a book fair. At one school, 700 Title 1 students were each able to choose four books to keep!**

Each student will be asked to bring home the **Note to Parents/Guardians**. This will serve to explain The OCHO Project to adults and to encourage support for their child's participation. It is important for parents and guardians to understand how much their child will benefit from helping others!



**Students will participate in planning the book fair, sorting books by genre, and making decisions as to how it should be set up. Both critical thinking and problem solving skills will be used in this project. They will also put up posters around school and cut OCHO Book Coupons that will be given to recipient students.**





## The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need The Book Fair

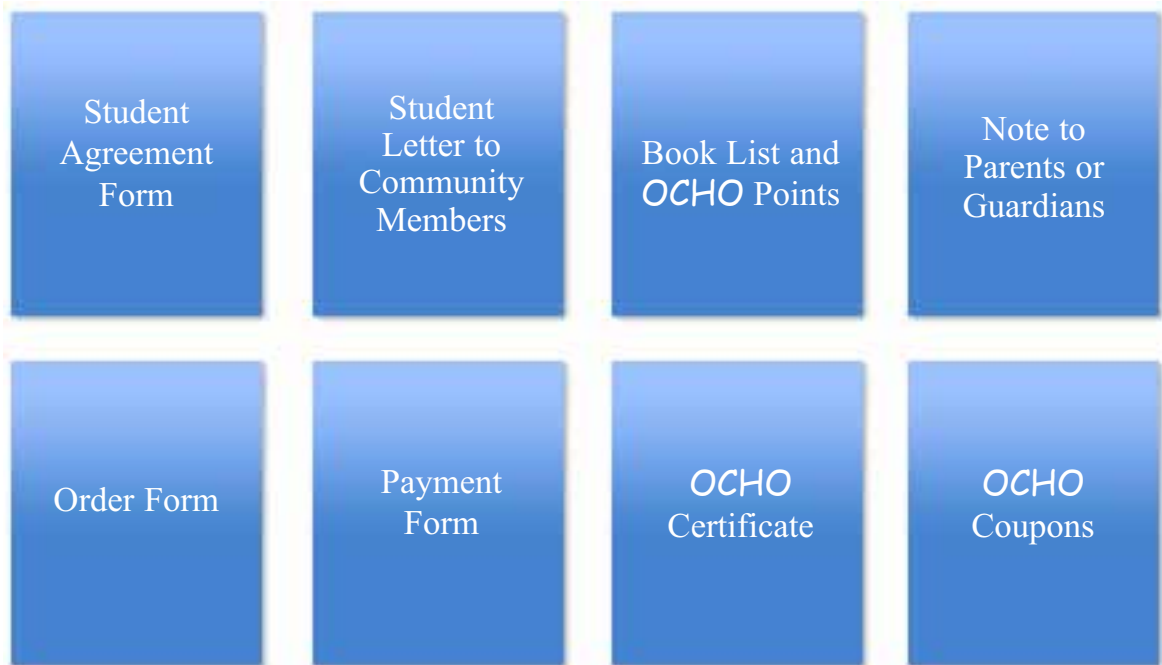


The book fair can be held at any location. The photo on the left is of students at a Title 1 school that held the book fair in their media center. The photo on the right is of students at a Title 1 school that partnered with students of a non-Title 1 school. The students chose to meet in each other's classrooms to give out books.



**We LOVE our new books because we are taking them home to keep!**

## The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need Materials and Costs



### Materials Needed

paper for printing all forms  
 book stickers or stars  
 books for the book fair  
 collection basket for coupons  
 collection jars for small change  
 optional:  
 snacks such as pretzels or popcorn  
 small gifts such as pencils  
 (from Title 1 students to students  
 at partnering school)  
 labels (placed inside of books with  
 name of donating school)  
 book - *The Biggest and Brightest Light*  
 CD - *The Biggest, Brightest Light of All*

### Costs

printing of *OCHO* forms (\$60 for 100 color pages)  
 #300-47101- stickersgalore.com (\$1.99 per 100)  
 bus service between partnering schools (\$100)  
 can be made  
 snacks (about 25 cents per child)  
 personalized *OCHO* Pencils (20 cents each)  
 labels (about \$30 for 1000 labels)  
 book (\$15.00 plus shipping)  
 CD with music and lyrics (\$12.95 plus shipping)

\*Optional items, such as snacks, small gifts, and labels can sometimes be provided by the PTA. Corporate sponsors can help with costs of printing forms and posters.

## The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need

### Getting Students to Voice the Concern that Leads to Service

Before starting The *OCHO* Project, students must identify a community, national, or global problem. It is then that students should engage in inquiry so that they fully understand the issues and the implications of the stated problem.

To do this, the teacher can pose questions to students such as:

Do you think all children can read?

Do all adults know how to read?

What happens if children go through school and never really learn to read?

Suggested student engagement:

Teacher groups the students in pairs or threes. Students take turns at the computer and begin using search words or phrases that they, as a class, identified.

Examples of search words or phrases to Google:

literacy

being able to read

children who can't read

Suggested quote for students to interpret and discuss:

“The number of books in a home is the single strongest indicator of a child’s future reading ability setting him or her on a track for success in school and in life.”

*Read for the Record*

Introduction of The *OCHO* Project:

Once the students fully understand the issues of literacy and the need to help make changes, the teacher can suggest The *OCHO* Project as a possibility for the class or school to do.

In service-learning, students connect to their community by addressing a specific need and committing to making a change through their efforts. Service-learning projects help both the students doing the project and the community in which they live.

## The **OCHO** Project: Read for a Need Steps for Success

1. Educators should present The **OCHO** Project to their colleagues, school administrators, and students to introduce the program and get everyone committed.
2. Teachers should consult with the school administration to select a school to partner with (if applicable). Once the selection has been made, the partnering school is contacted, and a date and venue for the book fair is selected.

**Title 1 schools** can choose to have the book fair for their own students. These students should look for opportunities to “pay it forward” by donating a box of books from the book fair to children in a homeless shelter, a children’s hospital, or even to a school in Africa.

**Non-Title 1 schools should find a Title 1 school to partner with.** In this case, students at the Title 1 school will be the recipients of the books at the book fair. These Title 1 students will be required to also read eight books to enhance their reading skills and to earn their **OCHO** coupons to exchange for free books. They should not be required to collect any pledge money.

3. The **OCHO** Project has entered into an agreement with **LOOK AT A BOOK**, a bookstore in Miamisburg, Ohio, that specializes in quality used books. Chip Houghton, the owner of **LOOK AT A BOOK**, will provide books to schools at greatly discounted prices. **Please email Chip at [chip@lookatabook.net](mailto:chip@lookatabook.net) two months in advance to advise him of the anticipated date for your book fair. Your order must be received three weeks in advance of your book fair.**

4. Teachers should begin by explaining to students what a service-learning project is and that **OCHO** stands for **Opportunities for Children to Help Others**. Ocho is a Spanish word that means number eight. An octopus was chosen for the **OCHO** logo because it has eight tentacles that are representative of students “reaching out their hands” to make a difference. The octopus is holding a book of a different genre in each tentacle. The objective of the project is to have students read eight books and, at the same time, “earn” books for children who do not have any books at home to read.

5. Students need to research and investigate the community need that will be met. This step is important in the learning process for problem solving. Once students and educators commit to the project, **students should promote it** through various forms of communication available at the school (i.e., morning announcements, school newspapers, and **OCHO** posters). You will be provided with a **jpeg** file to create a poster with the **OCHO** logo. Email the **jpeg** file (see Resources and Jpeg Files) to FedEx® Office or a local printer to have posters made.

6. Since teachers are not permitted to deposit money from their students, a club must be established for the purpose of collecting and depositing coins from collection jars in the classrooms. **The OCHO Club** will be established for the purpose of all financial transactions.

A volunteer parent or educator will be charge. Teachers may hold on to the money the students have turned in or turn the money in to The *OCHO* Club as it is collected. Books will be purchased by the *OCHO* Club and donated to the program. The volunteer can assist with printing *OCHO* book coupons and posters. The **Business Letter to Community Partners** can be used to send to potential donors in your community when asking for support. The volunteer should also consult with school administrators to make sure that a **press release** is sent out. Students should be involved in writing both the press release and the letter to community partners.

7. **Students must read eight books** over a given period of time set by the teacher (usually six to eight weeks) **and earn eight *OCHO* points from reading activities** that are linked to the curriculum. As an example, two points can be given for each of the following activities:

- read two or more books on online at [www.wegivebooks.org](http://www.wegivebooks.org)
- donate a new or used book
- make an *OCHO* poster for the school
- do a report on Muhammad Ali and the character values he stands for
- illustrate the cover of a favorite book (hang in cafeteria or library)
- create a poster showing what a specific character trait looks like, sounds like, and feels like
- do an oral or written book report
- READ ALOUD by reading a book to someone else
- give a book review on the morning announcements

8. **Students bring in collected change** to put in collection jars in their classrooms. The teacher will give the funds to the *OCHO* Club volunteer. Students are on the honor system that the coins they bring in will be put in the collection jars. Eight gently used books for the book fair will be sent to each participating classroom for every \$8.00 that is collected.

9. **Teachers and students can brainstorm together to find ways to get extra books for the book fair.**

- post your project on [www.DonorsChoose.org](http://www.DonorsChoose.org) with the amount of money you hope to raise (public school teachers, guidance counselors, and librarians refer to page 50 in this guide)
- collect change at school "(Small Change for a Big Change" or "Change for Change")
- have students bring in books from home that they no longer use
- send home *OCHO* flyer that parents can post in their place of business to collect books
- have book drives that are held outside of school, set up with help of a PTA or parent volunteer, at churches, libraries, stores, movie theaters, community sporting events
- donations from We Give Books ([www.wegivebooks.org](http://www.wegivebooks.org)); refer to page 50 in this guide
- apply for service-learning grants
- funding and/or book donations from service organizations as Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lyons
- funding and/or book donations from community business partners

10. As **this project focuses on whole school or class engagement**, every child in the participating classrooms will choose book(s) at book fair, regardless of how many books they read or how many *OCHO* points were earned. Those students who both read eight books and get eight points will be recognized with an *OCHO certificate* that can be hung in the classroom.

11. Each student will be given three forms to bring home:

**Student Agreement Form** explains the project to the student's parents. It is to be signed by the student and parent and then returned to the teacher.

**Student Letter to Community Members** is for the students to present to others who may want to donate small change for The *OCHO* Project. Students are to put their name on the top line of the *TEAM OCHO* card and their school name on the bottom line. This gives students ownership of the project and makes them feel a part of a group that is working together for a common cause.

**Note to Parents / Guardians** is one of the most important elements to the success of this project. It is most important for parents to have a full understanding of how much their own children will benefit from their participation in The *OCHO* Project.

12. The teacher will write the student's name on the **Order Form** and document how many books were read and how many *OCHO* points were earned. This will enable teachers to monitor each student's progress and participation in The *OCHO* Project. The form will also need the total amount of money collected by the class from the collection jar.

13. When all the students have read their books and earned their points, books can then be ordered through The *OCHO* Club. The teacher turns in the completed **Order Form** to the *OCHO* Club volunteer. The volunteer completes the **Payment Form for LOOK AT A BOOK**, staples it to all of the Order Forms, and mails it to the address on the Payment Form.

14. **Student preparation for the *OCHO* book fair** - Students can participate in cutting *OCHO* coupons. Schools may elect for students to do their own printing. Recipient students will use these coupons to exchange for books of their choice. Students also sort books into different genres for the book fair.

15. A press release should be sent out from the school or individual teacher to the local media (newspaper, television, and radio stations) two weeks prior to the book fair date. Follow the **Press Release Format** when faxing or emailing the information. Positive public recognition is a great way to promote the program for your school and may encourage other schools to become involved, as well. It also builds solid relationships between your school, students, and the community at large. It will boost personal pride and make students feel valued.

16. It is important that students share their reading experience and their efforts to help others through The *OCHO* Project. This enhances the student's experience and adds an **intergenerational component**. This process gives students an opportunity to express themselves to individuals of a different generation. It also helps to build their self-esteem.

**17. There are several ways to execute the book fair.**

**For individual schools** - Title 1 schools that do The *OCHO* Project for their own students can set up the book fair in the media center (gymnasium, cafeteria, or location of choice). Books should be arranged by genre on different tables. One class at a time will visit the book fair. Students will be given a predetermined amount of *OCHO* coupons to be exchanged for books of their choice. Six students at a time will select their books, then sit and read while the next six students make their selections. Student council representatives can assist students in finding books that they like. The *OCHO* coupons are placed in a basket after the students select their books.

**For partnering schools**- Non-Title 1 schools that partner with Title 1 schools have several options for creating their book fair. The non-Title 1 school can set up the book fair in their media center and invite the Title 1 students to come to their school. Optionally, each class can also have the partnering school class of the same grade visit their classroom where students will buddy to share books. The non-Title 1 students will aid the Title 1 students in choosing books. This encourages new friendships and teaches children that, despite their differences, there is much that they share in common with each other.

**18. Transportation** - Students can be bussed by individual classes to the partnering school. This works well as it requires only one bus that can go back and forth between the two schools. The book fair may extend for two days, depending on how many classes are participating.

**19. Setting up** - A few days before the book fair, boxes of books from each class should be delivered to the site where the book fair will be held. Students, teachers, and media specialists can participate in sorting the books and displaying them for the book fair.

**20.** All students, **following the book fair**, should send a friendly letter to the students with whom they shared the *OCHO* experience and to community supporters. Students can follow the format in the **Lesson Plan for Writing to Pen Pals**.

**21. Students should keep a reflection journal** in which they can write and/or illustrate their thoughts on their service-learning experience. These reflections should address how the experience made them feel, how it changed them, the difference they made for others in regard to literacy, and the impact it had. A class discussion is also a wonderful part of the reflective process. The discussion should include an understanding of the character traits that the students exhibited during this project such as honesty, empathy, respect, responsibility, and caring.

**22. Detailed notes and photographs** of students should be kept throughout the project. Teachers should use these photos to recognize and praise their students. It is easy to do this with service-learning projects because no child, regardless of his or her intelligence or talent, can fail at helping others. Photos should be displayed in prominent places throughout the school for everyone to see. This will be a constant reminder to students of how good it feels to help others!

## The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need Business Letter to Community Partners

March 10, 2009

Dear Community Partner:

Northwest Elementary students will be participating in a service-learning project in April in conjunction with National Youth Service Day. The program we have chosen to participate in is The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need. *OCHO* stands for Opportunities for Children to Help Others. Our students will be “serving” others while “learning” to read in an effort to address literacy issues in our community.

Every year when our school book fair comes around, many students are left out because their families do not have money for them to purchase books. Many of our students have no books at home. At Northwest, we value reading and encourage students to read during their time off in the summer. With The *OCHO* Project, we hope that every student will leave for the summer with several books to take home as their own.

The objective of The *OCHO* Project is to have students read books and, at the same time, earn books for themselves and for others who have few or no books of their own. Our students will each read eight books and earn eight *OCHO* points for completing academic reading activities. Students will bring in change that will be collected in jars placed in each classroom. It is this money that will be used to purchase gently used books for our book fair so that students will have books to take home.

*This is where you can help.* We are reaching out to the community and to our business partners who are willing to donate money for used books or have book drives at your place of business. **All you have to do is make a contribution in any amount and mail your check payable to Northwest Elementary School to \_\_\_\_\_ by March 31<sup>st</sup>. Please drop off all collected children’s books at the school office on or before March 31<sup>st</sup>.** Donations are tax deductible and we can send you a receipt upon request. We also welcome businesses that are able to donate color-printed materials for this project. Please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ with any questions.

Thank you for helping our students help themselves while learning the value of helping others!

Sincerely,

Lisa Peart  
Guidance Counselor

# The OCHO Project: Read for a Need

Opportunities for Children to Help Others

## Student Agreement Form

**Objective:** To have students read eight books and, at the same time, provide books for children who have few or no books of their own at home to read. Students will "serve" and "learn" while building character values.

**Goal:** To improve literacy, encourage a love of reading, and teach children that when you help others, you help yourself in the process.

**Method:** Students will read eight books and earn eight OCHO points from academic reading activities. Money to purchase gently used books for the free book fair will be collected as students bring in any change that they can throughout the year and put it in *Small Change for Big Change* collection jars in their classrooms. Students will count the money and the teachers will give the money to the OCHO Club volunteer who will purchase books for the book fair. For every \$8.00, eight gently used books will be sent to the school. Boxes of earned books will be sent to each participating classroom from the used bookstore partner. Additional books will be collected from book drives at school and local community venues.

**Result:** These books will be used to create a book fair at school. Students will participate in organizing the book fair and in providing coupons so that other students may choose books at no cost. The school and community will participate, as a family, in this effort. Both students and community members will work together to make a difference for others.

### ***Student Pledge***

I agree to read eight books and to earn eight OCHO points. I will list the books that I have read and keep track of my points.

***Student's signature*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Parent's signature*** \_\_\_\_\_

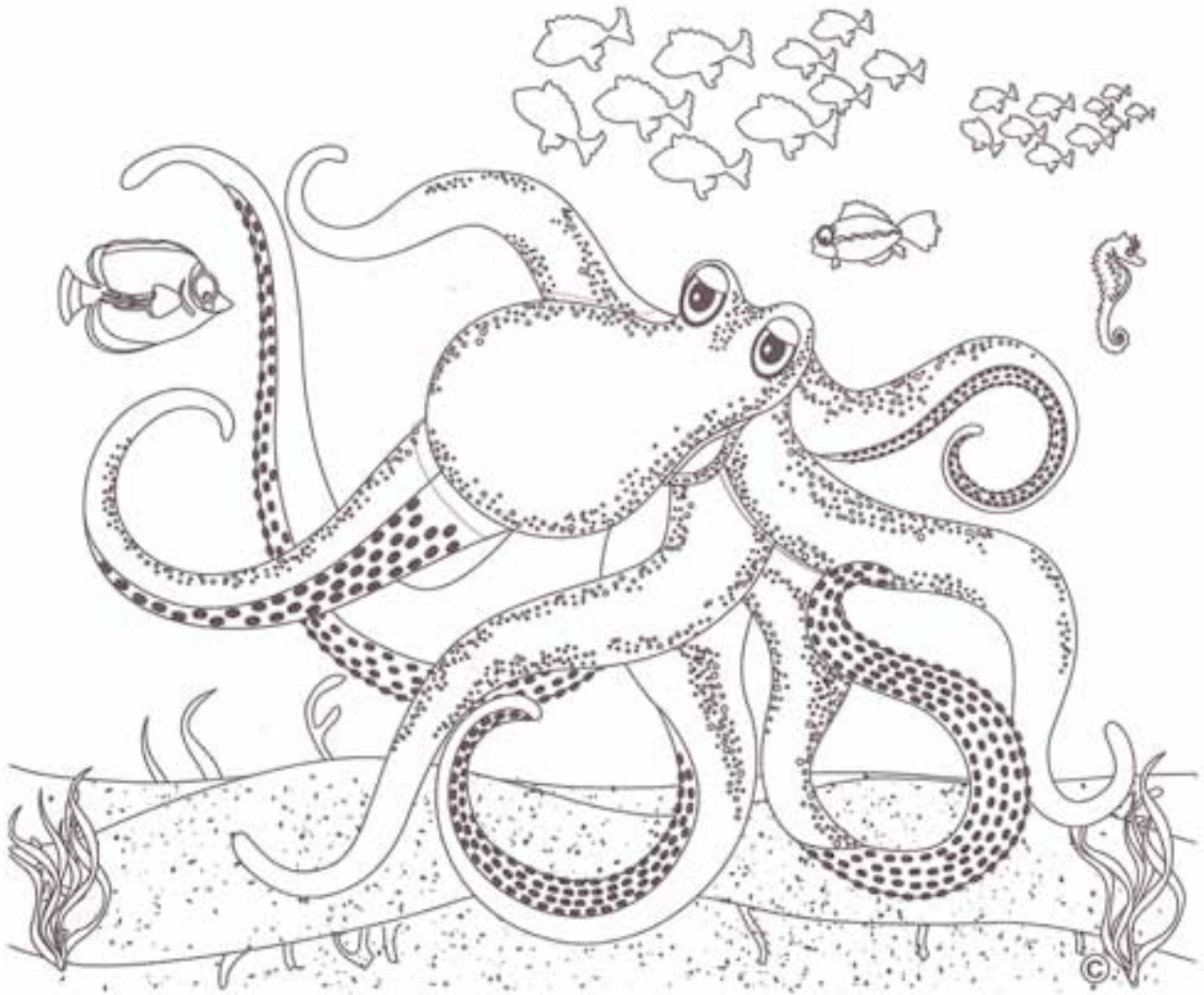


### Student Letter to Community Members:

I am doing a project at my school called The OCHO Project: Read for a Need (Opportunities for Children to Help Others). The purpose is to teach kids like me how to help ourselves and help others at the same time. I have to read eight books and earn eight OCHO points for reading activities. I am collecting small change for our *Small Change for Big Change* collection jar at my school. This money will help us buy gently used books for the free book fair. The students who receive these books will get OCHO coupons to select books that they can keep. Many kids can't afford to buy new books, so this project will give them a chance to learn to love reading and to be able to have books at home.

I understand the literacy problem in our community and want to make a difference. I would really be happy if you could help by donating a book or small change. Thank you!

Put a star or sticker on each tentacle of the octopus when you earn OCHO points for reading activities.



The OCHO Project Book List

Finished

	The OCHO Project Book List	Finished
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

## The OCHO Project: Read for a Need

### Note to Parents / Guardians

Your child will be participating in a service project at school in which he or she will learn academic skills and character traits in addition to making a difference or others. Your child has an understanding of the literacy issues in this community and is now capable of addressing this need through a school program. The *OCHO Project: Read for a Need* provides *Opportunities for Children to Help Others* through reading and obtaining books to donate to kids who have few or no books at home. This program links directly to your child's academic curriculum at school.

Proven research data shows that children engaged in service-learning projects (where children “serve” and “learn” at the same time) perform better on standardized tests, have better school attendance, and have fewer discipline problems.

Each child is being asked to read eight books and to earn eight *OCHO* points for academic reading activities. We are also asking children to bring in any small change that they can to put in our *Small Change for Big Change* collection jar. The money will be given to The *OCHO* Club at school to purchase books that will be donated to the students to create a free book fair for children in need who have few or no books of their own. Every child in the school will be a participant. Please sign the Student Agreement Form and send it back to school with your child. This experience is valuable to your child and is a positive way for adults in the community to view the young people who will be the future leaders.

If you are able to have a book drive at your place of business, this would be a tremendous help in providing additional books for the fair. Please bring books to the school office by \_\_\_\_\_.

This project offers you, as parents and guardians, opportunities to help your children be successful by **supporting** them, **believing** in them, and **valuing** what they are doing. This can easily be accomplished by doing one simple thing. Sincerely **PRAISE** your children for their part in helping others! **Your children will believe in themselves because you believe in them.**

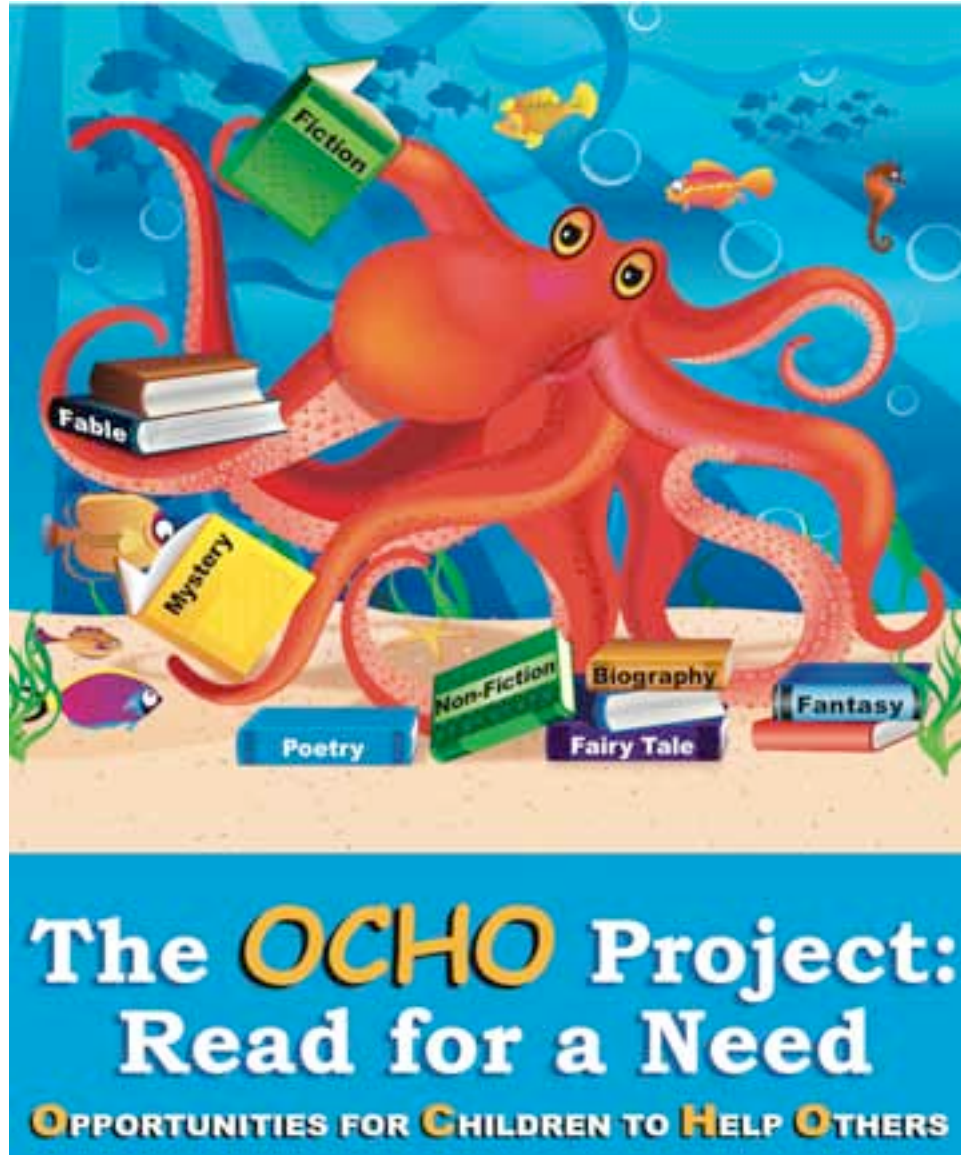
“All that’s required on your part is a willingness to make a difference,” said President Obama when he signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act. “It’s as simple as that. Anyone can do it. You don’t need to be a community organizer, or a Senator -- or a Kennedy – or even a President to bring change to people’s lives.”

Please help your child by encouraging his or her efforts and by understanding that your *own* child will be the one to benefit greatly from helping someone else.





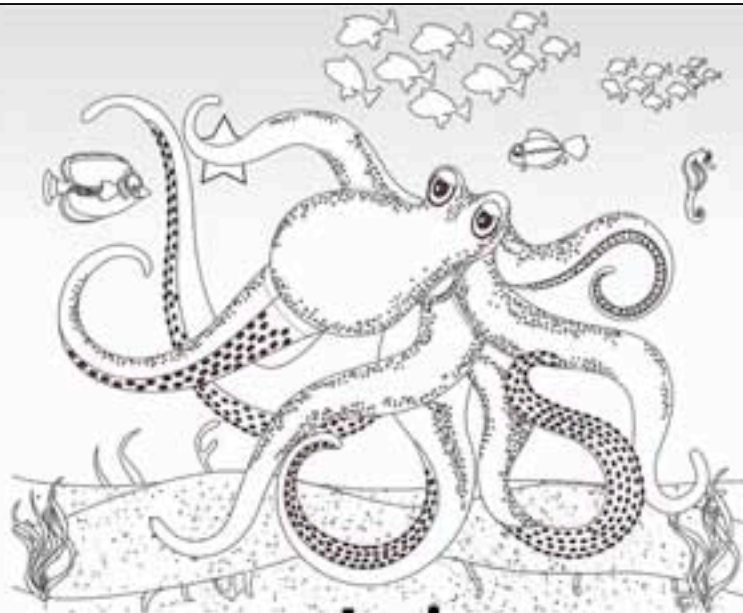




The OCHO Project is a service-learning project dedicated to exposing children to the joys of reading while teaching them that, through reading, they can help others less fortunate than themselves. The objective of the program is to have students read not only to expand their own knowledge but also to help “earn” books for their fellow students who have few or no books of their own. Students will “learn” and “serve” while building character values.

**PLEASE HELP STUDENTS COLLECT NEW OR USED BOOKS !  
Deposit children’s books in collection box.**

School \_\_\_\_\_  
Date needed by \_\_\_\_\_



# Congratulations!

*This award is presented to*

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*for Outstanding Achievement in  
"Reading and Helping Others"*

---

Date

Signed



# The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need

## Press Release Format

**Contact:**  
**School name:**  
**Phone number:**  
**Fax Number:**  
**Email:**  
**Date and time of event:**  
**Venue of event:**

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

#### **Students' Compassion Leads to Donation of 1500 Children's Books**

*Coral Springs, Florida - September 10, 2008* - Three hundred students at Coral Park Elementary School participated in a project to read and "earn" books for their fellow students at a neighboring Title 1 school. Each student read eight books, earned eight *OCHO* points for completing reading activities, and raised money by bringing in small change for collection jars. The funds were used to purchase gently used books for students at Hunt Elementary School. LOOK AT A BOOK, a used bookstore in Miamisburg, Ohio, is working closely with the school so that students get as many books as possible to donate to other children.

Coral Park students, who worked hard to create a book fair, will visit students at Hunt Elementary School to give books to kids who have few or no books of their own. The Hunt students will have the opportunity to select books of their choice that they can keep. "We'll make our great school even better by reaching out to help others," said the principal of Coral Park Elementary. "Our motto is: DO THE RIGHT THING!"

The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need is a character based service-learning project dedicated to improving literacy, encouraging a love of reading, and teaching kids that you help yourself when you help others. It gives students an opportunity to address community literacy issues by providing books for kids to have at home, thus enhancing reading skills.

"We had a book fair here last year and a student told me sadly that every year, when the book fair comes, she can never get anything. It breaks my heart and there are many more children here in the same situation," said the guidance counselor from Hunt Elementary. "We are so grateful to these young people at Coral Park Elementary for making a difference!" **(This is a suggested quote and not an actual quote.)**

Dianne Sepielli, coordinator of Character Education for Broward County Schools, supports the efforts of Coral Park Elementary School. Since 1999, the Florida Legislature mandated that a character development program be implemented in every elementary school of the state. In the 2002 legislative session, the law was modified to include grades K-12 and implement a program that included all eight traits from Broward County and patriotism. From this project, students learn kindness, honesty, respect, and responsibility, in addition to academic skills. The objective is to educate their minds as well as their hearts. **ENDS**

The OCHO Project: Read for a Need  
 News Article from The Tampa Tribune

THE SUNDAY 5.31.2009  
**TAMPA**  
 and The Tampa Times  
**TRIBUNE**

[homeroom]



Drummond photo by ANNY JONES

A service project at Northwest Elementary School made it possible for every student, including Alexis Drummond, 8, to take home free books from a recent book fair.

## School book drive spreads smiles

By MEGAN HUSSEY  
 Tribune correspondent

HUTTON • Alex Galoza celebrated his eighth birthday Wednesday by helping classmates in need.

As one of 200 students who collected pledges for the OCHO — Opportunity for Children to Help Others — service project at Northwest Elementary School, Alex helped make it possible for every student at Northwest to take home free books from last week's book fair.

"It made my heart feel warm to help," he said. "Some of my friends said that when they went to the fair and saw all those books, their own hearts beat so fast they couldn't stop them."

Students collected pledges to read eight books each, earning a dollar a book, and brought used books from home. They collected more than \$1,200 to buy books for this year's fair from Look At a Book. Store owner Chip Houghton donated 500 books. Northwest's business and community partners sponsored books for 80 students, and Veterans Elementary conducted a book drive.

The school collected 3,000 books for the fair. The project was greatly needed, said Northwest guidance counselor Lisa Pratt.

"Every year it would break my heart to see students that didn't have enough money to buy a book at the fair," she said. "I'd find myself reaching in my own purse to get change to help them."

Pratt contacted Marilyn Pezlyn, a children's book author who founded the OCHO project, a national effort to promote literacy and community service for children. Pezlyn previously had worked with schools that staged book-collection efforts on behalf of Title I schools, where a large number of students come from low-income families. But this is the first time a Title I school has conducted its own OCHO project, she said.

"Northwest is a model school," said Pezlyn, who flew from Delray Beach for the book fair.

Many student council members volunteered at the fair, including council President Nicholas Golden, 10.

"Reading makes the mind grow," said the fifth grader. "This is a good activity for all the kids."

Students who collected pledges received five books; they were allowed to keep one and donate the others.

Taking books home will help students improve their reading during the summer, teacher Sue Samuelsen said.

# The OCHO Project: Read for a Need

## Lesson Plan: Writing to a Pen Pal

**Objective** - is to have students learn friendly letter writing skills by becoming a pen pal with another student whom he or she met through The OCHO Project

**Materials Needed** - are computers, computer paper, scissors, glue, and crayons/markers; *Polly's Pen Pals*

**Skills** - reading, writing, listening, speaking, technology, and art.

**Preparation** - Teacher creates a model of a friendly letter that students use as a format for writing to their pen pal (see sample).

**Read Aloud** - Read *Polly's Pen Pals* by Stuart Murphy.

**Class Discussion** - Brainstorm with students for the definition of a pen pal and what it is like to make a new friend. Discuss the new friends that students made with children of the partnering school. Share questions that classmates can ask their pen pals.

Questions that you might ask your pen pal:

How many people are in your family?

How old are you and when is your birthday?

Do you have any pets?

What is your favorite book that you got at the OCHO book fair?

Do you like to read?

What do you like to do?

How do you feel about making a new friend?

Have you ever had a pen pal?

What would you like to tell your pen pal about yourself?

**Participation** - Students write a rough draft to their pen pal following the format of the model friendly letter. Teachers should conference with each student on an individual basis to perfect the letter on format, content, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and complete sentences. Introduce students to the Microsoft® Word application and how to use it. Review how to change the text font, size, color, and placement of the text on the paper. Students will use edited rough drafts as a guide to type their letters. Teachers should review the final letters before students print them. Introduce students to a clip and art program on the computer. Students will learn to search for sticker-like illustrations that will personalize their letters (as balloons for birthday celebrations). Students can then print the selected illustrations. If printed in black and white, the students can color the illustrations, then cut and paste them onto their friendly printed letters. Teachers will collect all the letters and forward them to the students at the partnering school for The OCHO Project.

## The OCHO Project: Read for a Need Model of a Friendly Letter

Introduce students to the five parts of a friendly letter: date, greeting, body, closing, and signature. Have students use this guide to write a rough draft of their letter to their chosen pen pal.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ month, day, year (date) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dear (name or pen pal), (greeting) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I hope that you are enjoying the books that you picked at the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ OCHO book fair. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (body) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Your friend, (closing) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Your name (signature) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need  
Friendly Letter Sample



January 6, 2009

Dear Tyra,

I miss you a lot. I hope you remember me. I hope you like your books. I can't wait for you to come to our school. It's awesome. Your school is too. Hope you had a great vacation.

Your friend,  
Raquel 2nd gr.

p.s. How is the book I gave you?

## The OCHO Project: Read for a Need Evaluation, Student Assessment, and Standards

**Evaluation:** The OCHO Project evaluation consists of two sources of data.

Quantitative data includes the number of students participating, the number of books read, and the number of OCHO points earned for completing additional reading activities. This is also referred to as summative data and is evaluated by what the students did. Teachers can elect to compile this data, if desired.

Qualitative data is based on student reflection and what the students learned.

**Assessment:** Using the Rubric, the teacher can assess students' understanding, participation, and learned skills from The OCHO Project.

<p>1 <b>Student did not have a full understanding of The OCHO Project as related to literacy issues and the need to serve others. Student read some books, could identify one character trait, and had little participation.</b></p>	<p>2 <b>Student had a basic understanding of the purpose of The OCHO Project as related to issues of literacy. Student read most of the books, had a sense of numerous character traits, and liked doing the project.</b></p>	<p>3 <b>Student clearly understood the purpose of The OCHO Project as related to issues of literacy. Student read all of the books, could identify most of the character traits, and is desirous of repeating the project next year.</b></p>
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### **Educational Standards:**

Lesson Plan: Writing to a Pen Pal

Lesson Plan: Reflection on the OCHO Project

**Standard: LA.B.1** Drafts and revises simple sentences and passages, stories, letters, and simple explanations that: express ideas clearly; show an awareness of topic and audience; have a beginning, middle, and ending; effectively use common words; have supporting detail; are in legible printing.

Lesson Plan: Literature, Character, and Music

**Standard: LA.B.2** Writes questions and observations about familiar topics, stories, or new experiences.

**Standard: LA.E.2** Responds to a work of literature by explaining how the motives of the character and the causes of events compare with those in his or her own life.

**Standard: MU.E.2** Understands how musical preferences reflect one's own experiences.

The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need  
**Lesson Plan: Reflection on The *OCHO* Project (Grades K-1)**

Fill in the boxes with drawings or words that share your thoughts on the word or phrase in each box.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

MY FAVORITE BOOK	MY BEST CHARACTER TRAIT
LITERACY	HELPING OTHERS



## The OCHO Project: Read for a Need

### Character Traits

**Empathy/Caring:** Students will learn that feeling for someone else sometimes means feeling that person's pain or hardship (i.e., some students live in homes where parents cannot afford to buy books). Students learn that it is not enough to think about caring for someone. They must demonstrate it through their actions to show that they care (i.e., some students go through the book fair and use one of their OCHO coupons to choose a book for a brother or sister).

**Respect:** Students learn that they must show consideration and value for themselves, others, and property. If they leave their books out in the rain, they will not be able to give the books that they have already read to somebody else.

**Responsibility:** Students learn that they are depended upon to read their books, earn OCHO points, and bring in small change. Without the money from the collection jar, they would not be able to obtain books for their book fair. This is their "job" and they are counting on each other to fulfill the commitment they made (i.e., "If I am the only one in my class to bring in small changes we will not be able to have a book fair.")

**Honesty:** Students must *always* tell the truth with *no* exceptions. If the student collects fifty cents for the collection jar, he or she cannot turn in twenty-five cents. Students learn that honesty affects them in every aspect of their life.

**Cooperation:** Students must participate together as a team to earn books to be able to have a book fair. Students learn how to work together for a common cause.

**Tolerance:** Students meet other students from their partnering schools and discover that, although they may be different, they share much in common in their interest in books. They recognize each other's differences and appreciate their commonalities.

**Perseverance:** Although reading may be difficult for some students, they learn that they can do it if they don't give up and "keep their eye on the prize," as boxer George Foreman says. As with any challenging task in life, the end result is often what keeps us going.

**Citizenship:** Students learn the importance of doing their part as citizens of the United States to help others. They learn that they are quite capable of doing something significant when they put their efforts together for a common cause. The good feeling that is felt will hopefully be an inspiration for them to repeat their actions.

**Self-esteem:** Students will develop pride in themselves, which will build from the positive reaction of the "outside world" to their deeds. When the media does a story on your students and the project they did, this reinforces their self-esteem. One child found \$135 cash in one of the books he had chosen at the book fair. The local reporter, who was at his school, hailed his honesty and wrote a separate article on this boy!

**Courage:** Some students may be uncomfortable meeting with students that they do not know at the partnering school. Students learn that the ability to go ahead with seemingly fearful tasks can end up as an unexpected reward (i.e., making new friends).

**Fairness:** It is only fair that all students receive the same number of book coupons for the book fair. However, only those students who read eight books and earn eight *OCHO* points will receive an *OCHO* Award Certificate. It is important for other students to recognize that this is fair because these students put in extra effort.

**Patriotism:** President Obama has signed the Service of America Act, encouraging Americans of all ages to help one another through service. When students participate in a service-learning project, it is a wonderful way for them to understand what a great country we live in and they are a part of the greater national community.

**Self-discipline:** Students who demonstrate hard work and plan their time well so that they read all their books and earn all of their reading points show that they are self-disciplined. This may mean wanting to play outside but not doing it because you have books to finish reading.

**Courtesy:** Students asking people for used books or small change must show good manners and be polite when speaking with their elders. They must show a positive attitude and genuinely thank those individuals who have donated to their cause.

**Trustworthiness:** Classmates are depending on each other to follow through by reading books, earning points, and bringing in small change. Every child wants his or her classmates to be able to count on him or her to get the job done. Trustworthiness is keeping your word to others.

**Integrity:** Students who have integrity act the same way to friends when they are not at school as they do to their teachers when they are in school. It is important to be on the inside the kind of person that you appear to be on the outside. This means genuinely helping others because you are a caring person versus doing it because you are told that this is a school project.

**Kindness:** Some students chose a book for their brother or sister at the book fair. Other students chose simple cookbooks to bring home for their mothers. These acts of thoughtfulness to please another person show what kindness looks like.

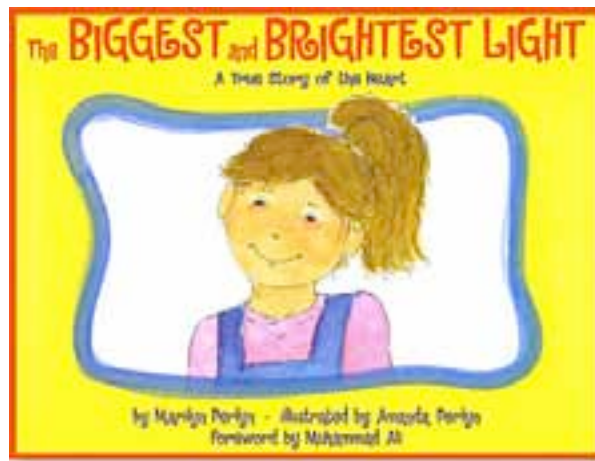
**Pursuit of Excellence:** Students do their best to learn and understand issues of literacy and keep trying without giving up.

# The OCHO Project: Read for a Need

## Lesson Plan: Literature, Character, and Music

**Objectives** - Recognize character traits in the main character of this book, learn and interpret lyrics of the companion song, and understand how to reflect on a book.

**Materials Needed** - *The Biggest and Brightest Light: A True Story of the Heart* by Marilyn Perlyn; Reflection for *The Biggest and Brightest Light: A True Story of the Heart*



**Skills** – reading, writing, oral and written expression through reflection, music, and research

**Read Aloud** - Read *The Biggest and Brightest Light: A True Story of the Heart*. Filled with splendid illustrations and inspirational ideas for children, this heartwarming true story gives children a real understanding of the good feelings that come from giving. Children will delight in seeing the school photo of Amanda and her teacher at the end of the story. The realization that Amanda is a real person leaves children looking for opportunities to follow her shining example.

**Listen to Music** - Listen to the *The Biggest, Brightest Light of All* CD. Students can learn the words to the song. By learning the lyrics of a song and interpreting its meaning, students are apt to remember the message.

**Research Project** - Students can research the strength of character in Muhammad Ali (who wrote the foreword in the book that was read).

**Class Discussion** - Students will discuss the main character of the book and share their thoughts on the character traits that young Amanda demonstrates. Students can present their findings on their research of Muhammad Ali and what character traits he has. Students will also discuss the lyrics to the music and what the words means to them.

**Participation** - Students will use written expression to answer questions on the Reflection Form for the book.

The **OCHO** Project: Read for a Need  
**Reflection for *The Biggest and Brightest Light***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Think about the story in *The Biggest and Brightest Light: A True Story of the Heart* and then answer the questions below.

1. How did this story make you feel? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Did you ever help someone? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. If so, how did it make you feel? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Did Amanda's story make you want to help someone? \_\_\_\_\_

---

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5. Would you like to be friends with Amanda and why? \_\_\_\_\_

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## The OCHO Project: Read for a Need Resources and Jpeg Files



Logo 8.5" x 11"



Logo 28" x 22"

Download JPG or PDF of the OCHO logo: [www.biggestandbrightestlight.com](http://www.biggestandbrightestlight.com)

***Strategies for Success with Literacy - A Curriculum that Serves*** by Cathryn Berger Kaye  
This is an innovative research-based approach to engaging students in literacy, character education, and civic engagement through service learning. [www.abcdbooks.org](http://www.abcdbooks.org)

***Safe and Caring Schools*** by Katia Petersen, Ph.D. Hundreds of ways to achieve classroom climate and achieve academic success by connecting literature with character values.

**Labels for books** (2" x 4"): Office Depot, item #612051, 1000 blank labels for \$30.00, 1-800-GO-DEPOT

**Personalized Pencils:** Personalized Mega Pencil Assortment, item #IN-47/362, \$14.95 for 72 pencils (20 cents each), available at [www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com)

**Stickers:** [www.stickersgalore.com](http://www.stickersgalore.com)

***The Biggest, Brightest Light of All*** CD with music and lyrics: [www.lee-knight.com](http://www.lee-knight.com) \$12.95

***The Biggest and Brightest Light: A True Story of the Heart*** by Marilyn Perlyn, retail price \$16.95  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) • [www.biggestandbrightestlight.com](http://www.biggestandbrightestlight.com)

Other notable website links

[www.ldonline.org/article/When\\_Older\\_Students\\_Can't\\_Read](http://www.ldonline.org/article/When_Older_Students_Can't_Read)

[www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-01-08-adult-literacy\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2009-01-08-adult-literacy_N.htm)

[www.theliteracysite.com/clickToGive/home.faces?siteId=6](http://www.theliteracysite.com/clickToGive/home.faces?siteId=6)

## The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need Grant Opportunities

Note: Teachers applying for grants should contact the grant liaison at their school for further information, deadline updates, and new grants. You may be required to make a copy of your application and submit it to the grant department of your school district.

### **Ezra Jack Keats Minigrant for School Libraries**

**About the grant:** Public school libraries that encourage literacy and creativity in children are eligible to apply.

**Awards:** Grants of up to \$500 are awarded.

**Applying:** Applications must be submitted to the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation by the September 15 deadline of each year. Application is available on Web site.

**Web site:** [www.ezra-jack-keats.org/programs/minigrant.html](http://www.ezra-jack-keats.org/programs/minigrant.html)

### **Sprint Character Education Grant**

**About the grant:** Accepts applications for funding of character education programs promoting leadership, youth volunteerism, character education, and school pride. Grants will fund the purchase of resource materials, supplies, teacher training and equipment that facilitates character education for K-12 students. Teachers in K-12 public schools are eligible to apply.

**Awards:** Grant amounts are not listed; however, in past years, the program awarded 64 grants totaling \$600,000 (average of \$9,375).

**Applying:** Applications must be submitted online. Check Web site for deadlines.

**Web site:** [www.sprint.com/responsibility/education/character](http://www.sprint.com/responsibility/education/character)

### Capital One Grant

**About the grant:** Capital One and Youth Service America know that all young people can be involved in volunteer service projects. By working with their family, school, friends, and neighbors, youth in low-wealth communities can address pressing issues.

**Awards:** Grants of up to \$500 support community service and service-learning projects engaging youth as volunteers for Global Youth Service Day.

**Applying:** Check Web site for deadline updates and application.

**Web site:** [www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org)

### Disney Grant Minnie

**About the grant:** Youth Service America, in partnership with the Disney Company, offers grants to support youth-led service projects that address the issues of education, poverty, and global citizenship in addition to others. Youth applicants, ages 5-14, are encouraged to apply. Children take a leading role in the planning and implementation of the service projects. Projects should be age-appropriate and involve no less than 20 volunteers. Projects where children work with older youth and adults (parents, coaches, teachers, etc.) are encouraged, but remember, *this is an opportunity for children to lead*. Teachers are also eligible to apply if they engage younger children in planning and implementing the project.

**Awards:** Grants of up to \$500 are awarded.

**Applying:** There are two rounds of awards:

Round 1- Projects must take place on Global Youth Service Day (in April).

Round 2 - Projects must take place in the fall (September through November)

Questions - Email [MinnieGrant@ysa.org](mailto:MinnieGrant@ysa.org)

Check Web site for updates for grant application and deadlines.

**Web site:** [www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org)

### **National Education Association Grants**

**About the grant:** Grants fund project-based learning and break-the-mold innovations that significantly improve achievement for underserved students.

**Awards:** Awards for Innovation Grants are \$5,000.

**Applying:** Practicing U.S. public school teachers in grades K-12 are eligible to apply. Applications may be submitted at any time.

**Web site:** <http://www.nfie.org/programs/grantguides.htm>

### **Pay It Forward Minigrant**

**About the grant:** These grants are available to schools to fund one-time-only service projects that students have chosen to perform to benefit their school, fellow students, neighborhood, or community. A “pay it forward” focus must be contained in the project (i.e., donating books to neighboring Title 1 school students, who in turn send a box of books to students at a school in Africa, who in turn bring books home to their village).

**Awards:** Grants are up to \$500. Awards may be used for materials, supplies, or bus transportation to another school.

**Applying:** Deadline September 15, 2009; check Web site for deadline updates

**Web site:** [www.payitforwardfoundation.org/educators/mini-grant.html](http://www.payitforwardfoundation.org/educators/mini-grant.html)

### **Citigroup Smarter Schools and Smarter Classroom Grants**

**About the grant:** The foundation's K-12 giving focuses on strengthening education in low-income neighborhoods. Its grant emphasizes the creation of "smarter schools" and "smarter classrooms." The smarter schools initiative supports improvement in higher standards for student performance. Schools and school districts are eligible to apply.

**Awards:** Funds can vary.

**Applying:** There is no deadline as applications are reviewed continuously.

**Web site:** <http://www.citigroup.com/citigroup/corporate/foundation>

### **State Farm Good Neighbor Service-Learning Grant**

**About the grant:** Projects are selected for their capacity to combine service with academic learning in order to cultivate well-rounded leadership among America's youth. Applications are available during the fall semester in order to select projects celebrating GYSD the following spring. Youth applicants are strongly encouraged to apply.

**Awards:** Grants of up to \$1,000 are awarded for the promotion of service-learning in the United States and Canada.

**Applying:** Applications are available during the fall semester in order to select projects celebrating Global Youth Service Day the following spring (usually in April). Check Web site for deadline updates and applications.

**Web site:** [www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org)

## The OCHO Project: Read for a Need

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: *Where is the book fair held?***

A: The book fair can be held in a number of places, depending on whether or not your school is partnering with another school. If you are a Title 1 school doing The OCHO Project for your own students, you can have the book fair in the media center, cafeteria, or gymnasium. Choose the location in which it will be easiest to display books on tables. If you are a non-Title 1 school partnering with a Title 1 school, you can choose to have the book fair in any of the stated locations in either school. You can also choose to have a class from one school meet in the classroom of the other school.

**Q: *How many books will each school receive?***

A: Add up the total amount of coins donated to get the number of books that you can order. You will receive one book for every dollar that is donated through the coin collection. Add to that the number of books donated through other sources for your total.

**Q: *How many OCHO coupons will each recipient student get?***

A: Divide the total number of books received by the number of participating recipient students to arrive at the number of coupons to give to each recipient student.

**Q: *Do we have to use LOOK AT A BOOK to get the used books?***

A: No, you may use any source that you wish. However, LOOK AT A BOOK has been working with The OCHO Project and it is geared to collect a large number of age appropriate books and sort them by grade level. They have been most generous in shipping extra books with an order to ensure that each recipient student will have one or more books.

**Q: *How do you find a school to partner with?***

A: You can consult with the character education chairperson in your district to find another school that is interested in doing a service-learning project. You can also contact the principal of a neighboring school to explain the program and see if he or she is interested. Be sure to explain the benefits to students at both schools.

## The OCHO Project: Read for a Need Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act

By Kittredge, Betsy Miller on March 30, 2009  
EdLabor Journal

### ***Calling Americans to Serve at a Critical Time***

*President Obama has called on Congress to create new service and volunteer opportunities for Americans that will help to build a stronger country. This legislation answers his call. It will launch a new era of service that will give Americans of all ages the opportunity to help our nation recover and make progress on education, health care, energy and other key goals by volunteering, whether it is helping students achieve in school, weatherizing homes and greening communities, rebuilding cities in times of disaster, feeding the hungry, helping seniors live independently, and much more.*

SEC. 1101 from The Serve America Act: “(9) expand and strengthen service-learning programs through year-round opportunities, including opportunities during the summer months, to improve the education of children and youth and to maximize the benefits of national and community service, in order to renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community for children and youth throughout the United States.”

The Serve America Act was signed into law by President Obama. This act encourages children of all ages to serve their country. It supports community service-learning by funding opportunities for elementary school students, as well as students of higher education, and also funds research for service-learning. By introducing children to service at an early age, it is more likely to become a more natural part of their lives. Our children and our country will prosper as a result of engaging youth in service-learning programs that encourage result-driven service projects that meet the needs of the community.

“Schools across America have rallied around community service and they are to be applauded,” said Dr. Robert Grimm, Director of Research and Policy for the Corporation for National and Community Service. “But research shows that service-learning offers more meaningful service opportunities for students and has numerous impacts on both students’ civic and academic success. **Service helps learning come alive. It is time to put learning back into service.**”

## The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need Program Organizers

**Marilyn Perlyn**, of Delray Beach, Florida, is a children's author and the creator of The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need. Marilyn's three children were involved in service-learning projects as youngsters and have each received local, state, and national recognition for their efforts to reach out and help others. It was after fourteen years of parenting that Marilyn learned a very valuable lesson from her six-year-old daughter. Much to her surprise, she realized that children, no matter what their age, have enough understanding, sensitivity, and capability of making a real difference in the world. The results of her own children's efforts have been remarkable, both externally to the people they have helped and internally to the development of their own self-esteem. Over the years, many children and parents have sought Marilyn's advice for suggestions and counsel on how to get involved in helping others.

Her inspiration for her book, *The Biggest and Brightest Light: A True Story of the Heart*, is rooted in her strong belief, based on many years of personal experience, that any properly guided child who understands that he or she *could* make a difference and *should* make a difference, *would* make a difference. For every child who comes to this realization, our world becomes a better place. Marilyn's book (grades K-5) is a true story that inspires children to want to help others.

She and her family are recipients of a national award from the Daily Points of Light Foundation, in addition to numerous other awards. Her children have appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show and have been written about in ten books. Marilyn is a frequent speaker at character education conferences and speaks on service-learning and character education.

You can email Marilyn with any questions or issues at [marilyn@biggestandbrightestlight.com](mailto:marilyn@biggestandbrightestlight.com). She is there for each of you to help make The *OCHO* Project successful for your students, school, and community!

**LOOK AT A BOOK**, located in Miamisburg, Ohio, is The *OCHO* Project book supplier. The company is owned by Chip Houghton. It is a family company that has been in the online books selling business since 2006. More than an online seller, LOOK AT A BOOK, is also a major supporter of literacy programs such as The *OCHO* Project and programs coordinated by Project Read in the Dayton, Ohio area (<http://www.project-read.org/index.html>). LOOK AT A BOOK is proud to be associated with The *OCHO* Project.

In addition to these projects, LOOK AT A BOOK has conducted a major recycling initiative. Over the past two and one half years, LOOK AT A BOOK has recycled over 7,000,000 pounds of books – books that are not sent to a landfill. Put another way, these books would cover every inch of a football field from one goal line to another creating a pile over thirteen feet high!

Chip is available to help you and answer all of your questions regarding The *OCHO* Project. He can be reached at (937) 866-2665 between the hours of 8 AM to 4 PM (EST). His email is [chip@lookatabook.net](mailto:chip@lookatabook.net). For any special requests, such as ordering books written in Spanish, please contact Chip and he will do his best to assist you.

**Northwest Elementary School (Title 1)  
Hudson, Florida**



**The media center is set up for the OCHO book fair.**



**One class comes every 30 minutes. Six children select their books while their classmates wait in line, holding their OCHO coupons.**



**Students read their books while they wait for their classmates to make their selections.**



**OCHO coupons go in this basket.**

**Coral Park Elementary and Hunt Elementary Schools  
Coral Springs, Florida**



**Students read together and help each other with difficult words.**



**Students from different backgrounds make friends with each other as they discover how much they share in common .**

## The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need Online Reading and Funding

Online Reading: **We Give Books** ([www.wegivebooks.org](http://www.wegivebooks.org))

- new digital initiative that puts books in the hands of children who don't have them
- combines the joy of reading with the power of helping others
- provides a platform to inspire children to become lifelong readers and lifelong givers
- online books are children's picture books for children through age ten
- mix of fiction and nonfiction, range of authors, read-alouds, books for independent readers
- new books added every month, together with special seasonal offerings

### **How It Works:**

Step 1: Sign up to join We Give Books and become a member (no fee-it's completely FREE!)

Step 2: Select a campaign

Step 3: Choose a book to read online

Step 4: Finish reading the book and a book will be donated to the campaign you chose

Online funding: **Donors Choose** ([www.DonorsChoose.org](http://www.DonorsChoose.org))

**How It Works:** DonorsChoose.org is an online charity that makes it easy for anyone to help students in need. Teachers from public schools post their *OCHO* classroom project and their request for books on this website. You can select books from the available resource list on the site. Then indicate the amount of money needed to purchase the number of books you are requesting. Email your project link to friends, family, parents of your students, community partners, etc. You can also post it on Facebook. Once a project reaches its funding goal, the books will be delivered to your school. Photos of your students' project and thank you notes can be posted on the website. You will be surprised how quickly you will reach your goal!

**Please note:** Teachers from the same school or different schools can all post **The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need** as their project name. **However, you must personalize your project so that you are not simply reproducing each other's projects exactly.** For instance, you will be partnering with different schools, have book drives in different ways, have unique academic reading activities for students to earn *OCHO* points, have an event where all the students read the same book on the same day, pay it forward by sending some books to different countries or donating to a children's hospital. Just be specific as to how you will implement this project in *your* classroom.

The *OCHO* Project: Read for a Need  
**Small Change for Big Change**

LABEL FOR CLASSROOM COLLECTION CONTAINER

