

FORMER GOVERNOR JEB BUSH CELEBRATES A DECADE OF READING AND FAMILY LITERACY SUCCESS STORIES

~ 2010 Celebration of Reading raises \$3.4 million in contributions and in-kind donations to fund many more years of successful family learning~

Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush kicked-off his 10th Annual Celebration of Reading event on February 12th in Bonita Springs, Florida surrounded by family, friends and famous authors –all supporters of successful family literacy programs.

“It’s hard to believe that ten years ago I launched the Florida Family Literacy Initiative to provide moms, dads and their young children a place where they could learn together; a place where they would get a second chance for a better life,” said Bush. “This effort has grown stronger each and every year thanks to the incredible work of the students, staff and the generosity of supporters who understand that the ability to read and write is essential if families are to succeed and thrive in life.”



Bush was joined at this year’s Celebration of Reading by his parents, former President George H.W. and Barbara Bush, as well as best-selling authors who have donated their talents to the family literacy fundraising efforts.

As the Initiative embarks on another decade of helping families become lifelong learners, Bush announced a \$500,000 grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation which will be matched 100% by local and private grants. The award will assist small, community-based organizations that offer family literacy programs to continue to serve families in need.

“The Dollar General Literacy Foundation proudly renews its commitment to Volunteer USA in support of their efforts to cultivate programs that help families learn together,” said David L. Beré, president of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. “We are honored to play a role in supporting educational initiatives that are opening doors for individuals who seek a new future for their families by pursuing their dreams of higher education.”

Dollar General was the founding partner of Volunteer USA’s Family Literacy Scholarship program, which launched in 2008. In its inaugural year, one adult student was offered a college scholarship. This year, through a partnership with the Florida Association of Postsecondary Schools and Colleges, scholarships have been awarded to seven family literacy students to pursue their academic and career goals. The following institutions have generously provided the



winning students with scholarships that cover all tuition and fees: ATI Training Center, Concorde Career Institute, Everest University, Herzing University, Kaplan University, Keiser Career College and Southwest Florida College.

Scholarship winner Nancy Tomayo-Galvez and son, Jose Mnauel expressed their gratitude for the opportunity for a better life. “When my son entered school, I could not talk to the teachers and I was scared that I would not be able to help my son with his homework. I knew my life had to change. I knew I must learn English. I even dreamed of going to college. With the support of my Parent Power Program and the Volunteer

USA Foundation, I received a scholarship to Keiser Career College and I plan to become a medical assistant. You have all made my dream come true,” said Tomayo-Galvez.

Authors who returned for the anniversary celebration included Derrick Barnes, James Bradley, Jill Conner Browne, Mary Higgins Clark, Carol Higgins Clark, Steve Doocy, Jeffrey Engel, Brad Meltzer, Sharon Robinson, Art Smith and R.L. Stine.



Author Brad Meltzer shares a book with Jeb Bush.



Fox & Friends host and author Steve Doocy enjoys a laugh at Celebration.

The Celebration of Reading events included the unveiling of an original painting created especially for the celebration by one of Florida’s first Highwaymen artists, James Gibson. The artwork incorporates a quote from family literacy champion Barbara Bush ... *“Reading opens the world to me and keeps me open to the world.”* Proceeds from its sale will benefit the Family Literacy Initiative.

Contributions raised by the 2010 Celebration of Reading event support the Family Literacy Initiative, managed by the Volunteer USA Foundation, which provides funding, training and technical assistance for literacy providers.