

# **Books to the Trail: A Service Learning Project for Classrooms!**

## **Teachers:**

Are you looking for a service learning project for students that will not only be fun and make a difference, but also be a project that promotes reading? Join our Books to the Trail project.



Our project provides brand new books to schools along the Iditarod Trail and other schools through out Alaska.



## **Directions:**

1. Collect NEW books.
2. Choose a process to collect NEW books.
3. Feel great about helping others be successful.

Contact [djohnson@iditarod.com](mailto:djohnson@iditarod.com) if you are interested in participating in this project and to receive specific directions.

## **Choose a Process:**

Design a 'book' fund raiser in the manner that works best for you and your students. You can collect new books or take orders from a book club. Collecting book orders will allow the books to be sent from the book club to the specific location and save you on postage.



You will be assigned a destination for book delivery. (Schools along the trail will be assigned at a first come, first serve basis and according to the 'kinds' of books and needs the schools have as well as your specific project plans.)

We hope you are interested in getting involved with this project. Get started by contacting [djohnson@iditarod.com](mailto:djohnson@iditarod.com) for further details.

Are you a school in need of books? Let us know your needs!

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How did we get started in this project?

When Grant Jacobson, Boise, Idaho, headed to Checkpoint Shaktoolik as a race volunteer working Trail Communications with Diane Johnson, Iditarod Education Director, packing light for the week in Shaktoolik wasn't an option. Grant's gear included the usual necessary items and the technology necessary to run the checkpoint during their weeklong stay. The gear also included a very heavy box. Books for the Iditarod Trail!



Two students from Seattle, Washington, Erika and Julia, had been inspired by a story they had heard about musher Linwood Fiedler, who had received a monetary award of \$2500 for being the first musher to Anvik during Iditarod 2001. Fiedler donated \$2000 to be divided between four schools along the trail to be used to buy books for kids. Erika and Julia worked with their classmates on a fundraising project to provide new books to a school along the Iditarod Trail. This service learning

project resulted in about 300 books being donated for their project. Grant brought the box with him to Alaska for delivery during the race.

One afternoon during the 2006 Iditarod, when school was in session in Shaktoolik, and the students were concentrating on the studies, Grant and Diane visited the school and shared a presentation about Iditarod and the Wells Fargo Teacher on the Trail™ program. They also delivered the books for the students. Grant read a letter



from Erika and Julia, telling about their project. Grant then opened the box of books and began to introduce the gift to the students. As each book was pulled from the box and the title read, the children repeated titles and showed their excitement, cheering for favorite books and authors. Before the teachers could get the books on a shelf, eager readers turned the pages as stories began to come to life. “I love to read!” shouted one child, eager to begin.

Thanks Erika! Thanks Julia! Your project and hard work has been inspirational! These children are enjoying your gift. As they turn the pages of the book, adventures begin, and reading skills improve, too!



To become involved in this service learning project or other similar projects, contact [djohnson@iditarod.com](mailto:djohnson@iditarod.com) or call 605 228 6071. “Books to the Trail” is an excellent service learning project for schools and communities because reading is a key to academic success. Service learning projects are authentic learning experiences that help students learn academic content in real world situations. Students also gain skills in responsibility, citizenship, and other positive character traits.



# Books to the Trail



**Service Learning Project: Character Education**

## Students Make a Difference!

After being inspired by about Linwood Fiedler donating money to schools after winning the First Musher to the Yukon during the 2001 Iditarod, Seattle, Washington students, Erika and Julia began a service learning project in their local school to help supply books to a school along the Iditarod Trail. They sent their 'gift' of about 300 books with Grant Jacobson, an Iditarod volunteer who was sent to Shaktoolik during the 2006 Iditarod.





**With undivided attention, the students watched as the books were unpacked. They eagerly chose books and began to read them, letting the books take them on adventures which would help them not only be better readers, but learn new things, too!**





**You can be a part of this reading adventure by organizing a service learning project in your school or community. If you are interested, contact [djohnson@iditarod.com](mailto:djohnson@iditarod.com) for details. Reading is a key to success. You can help others be successful in school by helping to send 'Books to the Trail'.**