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# Bernie's Book Bank Pushes To Get Books To Needy Kids

Benefit is tonight for Lake Forest man's foundation, which aims to distribute 1 million books by 2013.

By [Jim Powers](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 17, 2011 [Print](#)

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Brian Floriani takes reading personally.

His goal is to instill that same feeling among children from neighborhoods where books are a rare commodity. [Book Bank](#), the Lake Forest resident's foundation has distributed more than 260,000 books since Decemb

"We feel book ownership is imperative," Floriani said. "The kids are the book ambassadors in their home and neighborhoods, there are 13 books for every child. In low income, it's 300 children for one book. If we can fill books, that will make a difference."

To reach its goal, [Bernie's Book Bank is hosting a benefit from 6 to 10 p.m. tonight](#) (June 17) called "R Ave., Lake Forest. The cost is \$35 per person at the door, and there will be live music, food and beverages.

Originally begun in 2006 as The Bernard P. Floriani Foundation to aid a different charity each year, Brian's efforts needed to be directed toward a specific cause.

In 2008, after quitting his job as a golf pro, Floriani served as a reading interventionist at Shiloh Park Elementary reading below grade level.

From there, [Bernie's Book Bank](#) took hold.

"Within the first day of being in the schools, the wheels started spinning," Floriani recalled. "These children are. The problem is, for kids ages 0 to 6, they are not getting the same software that you and I was given. Use their life. That's a shame. It affects their pursuit of happiness and it affects all of us. They become liabilities

[Bernie's Book Bank](#) visits schools and passes out books three times a year so that each student will have they can call their own. The books come from a variety of sources, including book drives conducted with school packaging companies or distributors.

"We don't spend a penny on books," Floriani said. "The money we receive allows us to create programs and distribute them on a massive scale."

"We can leverage a dollar farther than most organizations," he added. "If you donate a dollar, we are able to

Floriani remembers the presence of books in his own home, and the idea of reading was modeled by his parents.

"I know just having books around was just so crucial," he said. "It lays the foundation to be a learner. If you learn learning how to read proficiently instead of reading to learn."

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His long-range goal is to make Bernie's Book Bank the vehicle for ensuring every needy child receives a book

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"My dream for this is to become an American institution," he said. "It's worthy and there is a need for it."

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