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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mayor Michael B. Hancock, Book Trust and BuildStrong Education Celebrate 500,000-Book Milestone

Community Partnership Sparks Love of Reading, Reading Achievement for 21,000 Students in Northeast Denver

Denver, CO, April 27, 2017 – Since 2013, the national literacy nonprofit Book Trust has worked with local partner the Foundation for Educational Excellence, now known as BuildStrong Education, to bring its program to over 5,000 elementary school students per year in eleven schools in Northeast Denver. Book Trust helps students in need celebrate reading and choose and own 1-3 books every month of the school year, building personal libraries of up to 30 books a year. An upcoming celebration will mark half a million books chosen by, and delivered to students in need, with Mayor Michael B. Hancock and a very special guest: school founder, educator and centenarian Marie L. Greenwood joining in to read with students.

According to Amy Friedman, President and CEO of the Denver-based Book Trust, “Many of us were privileged to grow up with unlimited access to books. Unfortunately, most of these kids just don’t have access to books outside of school. Book Trust doesn’t merely provide books, we empower kids to choose their own books – which they get to keep forever - and teachers celebrate those choices and the importance of reading with them every month of the school year.”

“As parents and educators, we know how important reading at grade level is to graduation rates, and if we can help kids learn to love reading, we’re giving a gift that lasts a lifetime,” says Molly Veliz, Book Trust Manager and fifth grade teacher at Marie L. Greenwood Academy, one of the schools participating in the program and the host school for the celebration event. “I always tell the story of one of our students, who was more than two years behind grade level and struggled with dyslexia. He has discovered his joy of reading, through the ability to build a library of books he chose and loves – books on science, farming and gardening, in his case – and he is just one of many Book Trust success stories. He’s reading much closer to grade level now, but more importantly, he is a proud and competent person who thinks of himself as a reader.”

BuildStrong Education has helped fund Book Trust’s presence in eleven Title I schools at a cost of just \$100 per child for the year since 2013. Over the life of the partnership, more than 21,000 students have been provided 500,000 books of their choosing. Executive Director Amy Schwartz adds, “As part of our mission to be a catalyst for school revitalization, we think the impact Book Trust has on the kids they serve is just incredible. What they’re really doing is helping these students become successful readers and learners so that they can carry that achievement throughout their lives. What a fantastic return on our investment.”



BookTrust
INSPIRING KIDS' PASSION FOR READING

The 500,000 Book celebration takes place on Wednesday, May 3rd, 2017, from 1 – 2:30 pm at Marie L. Greenwood Academy, 5130 Durham Court, Denver, CO 80239. Those interested in attending the celebration should contact Kristine McAuliff at 720.259.8047 or via email: kmcauliff@booktrust.org.

Book Trust is headquartered in Denver, Colorado, and currently serves 50,000 elementary school students in nineteen states, including over 22,000 students in Colorado. Currently, Book Trust has almost 600 schools representing 180,000 students on its national waitlist. Schools interested in bringing Book Trust to their students can request to be put on the waitlist by visiting the website: www.booktrust.org. Interested community partners who would like to fund the program in their local schools can contact Linda Mitchell directly at lmitchell@booktrust.org or 720.259.8048.

About Book Trust

Book Trust is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower children from low-income families to choose and own books, inspiring a passion for reading that leads to cultivating increased literacy skills and life-long learning. Since 2001, Book Trust has facilitated over 6 million book choices, and placed them in the hands of students in need.

About BuildStrong Education

BuildStrong Education is a private foundation grounded in the principles of smart community development. We know that education is not only a catalyst to great communities but communities can be a catalyst for great education. For that reason, our foundation is dedicated to taking an education-centric, community-driven approach to community development, economic development and student success in school and life.

BuildStrong Education is an evolution of the Foundation for Educational Excellence which was founded in 1997 by Pat Hamill, CEO of Oakwood Homes and Marshall Kaplan with the University of Colorado at Denver. Renamed BuildStrong Education in 2017, we are a 501c(3) non-profit, private foundation. Since its inception, BuildStrong Education, in partnership with Oakwood Homes, has invested over \$4 million dollars directly into the Green Valley Ranch, Montbello, and the broader Front Range communities to be used towards educational programs and reform initiatives including professional development, student recognition, new school development, and the creation of collaborative public/private partnerships.

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