

USA TODAY Continues Spirit of the USA Charity Program as Part of

USA TODAY Continues 'Spirit of the USA' Charity Program as Part of Newspaper's 25th Anniversary Celebration First Book highlighted today

MCLEAN, Va., July 13 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- As part of USA TODAY's 25th anniversary celebration, USA TODAY continues its "Spirit of the USA" 25- week charity program that highlights a different charity each week for 25 weeks.

The program began on March 30th and will continue every Friday through September 14th as USA TODAY thanks America for its support over the past 25 years by saluting the nation's generosity. USA TODAY has selected 25 charities and will celebrate the work of one charity per week for 25 weeks both in print and online via a signature USA TODAY Snapshot as well as on a special 25th anniversary web site on <http://www.usatoday.com/>.

This week's highlighted charity is First Book. First Book is an award- winning children's literacy organization committed to a simple mission: giving children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. Since 1992, First Book has placed more than 50 million books into the hands of children in need by supplying a steady stream of brand new books to more than 20,000 local literacy programs serving disadvantaged communities.

"I support First Book because I believe that books and reading can change lives," said Oscar-nominated actress Joan Allen. "As a mother, I know the magic of reading with my own daughter but, I am also aware that there are millions of children who have no books at all and never experience that magic. I'm grateful to USA TODAY for honoring First Book and highlighting the amazing work they are doing giving books to children in need, and to Cheerios for their ongoing support -- with their help we are reaching more kids than ever."

Readers are encouraged to learn more about First Book by viewing the Snapshot on today's front page of USA TODAY and on <http://www.usatoday.com/> as well as by visiting <http://www.firstbook.org/>.

Other charities scheduled to appear as part of the "Spirit of the USA" program are: National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Ducks Unlimited, Goodwill Industries International, Habitat for Humanity International, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Gilda's Club, Special Olympics, VH1 Save the Music Foundation and American Red Cross. Big Brothers Big Sisters, Thanks USA, Earth Day Network, NARSAD: The Mental Health Research Association, American Diabetes Association, Hispanic College Fund, National Center for Missing Exploited Children, Disabled American Veterans, the Arbor Day Foundation, America's Second Harvest, MusiCares, The Nature Conservancy, The Humane Society of the United States Ronald McDonald House Charities and Hole in the Wall Camps were previously highlighted.

"USA TODAY wanted to find a way to give back to the nation during our 25th anniversary celebration by celebrating causes that are closest to the hearts of Americans. We selected charities that represented a broad range of interests including environment, health, animals, arts, education, human services, and public benefits. We hope our readers will join us in saluting these charities," said Susan Lavington, senior vice president of marketing, USA TODAY.

USA TODAY, the nation's top-selling newspaper, will be celebrating its 25th anniversary on September 15th, 2007. It is published via satellite at 36 locations in the USA and at four sites abroad. With a total average daily circulation of 2.3 million, USA TODAY is available worldwide. USA TODAY is published by Gannett Co., Inc. (NYSE: GCI) . The USA TODAY brand also includes: USATODAY.com, an award-winning news and information Web site that is updated 24 hours per day; USA TODAY Sports Weekly, a magazine for enthusiasts of professional football and baseball; and USA TODAY LIVE, the television arm of the USA TODAY brand that brings the spirit and quality of the newspaper to television.

Website: <http://www.usatoday.com/>

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About the Author

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