



Reading Is
Fundamental
Jean Dean RIF

**signature service project of the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation-- all donations are tax deductible*

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Headline—SEE the NEED to READ to a Child in 2017!

What is something every single individual, organization or business in Alabama can do to help ourselves and everyone else in the state? Facilitate literacy!

Join with thousands of other Alabamians to focus on books and reading during 2017 by purchasing a 2017 SEE the NEED to READ to a Child “Reading Calendar” from Jean Dean RIF (Reading Is Fundamental)/Kiwanis. It is the ideal way to help buy books for at-risk young children across Alabama and take care of some of your early “holiday shopping”. The calendars are priced at \$12 to match the cost per child for Jean Dean RIF, a grassroots program which manages to provide 3 quality, age-appropriate books each to over 20,000 at risk young children across the state every year.

2016 was the 25th year for the program to put books into the hands and homes of our poorest children. The first “Reading Calendar”, the 15-16 school year “Get Caught Reading to a Child” calendar will end just in time for this new 2017 “SEE the NEED to READ to a Child Reading Calendar” to spread across the state. Over 2000 “Reading calendars” were sold last year.

Calendar sales continue to further the program mission: to provide books and volunteers to read them to help prepare at-risk young children to be READY for kindergarten and have hope of doing well in school and life. For most of the kids given Jean Dean RIF books, these are the FIRST books in their homes, making family literacy POSSIBLE for the first time. Vocabulary is built from listening to the stories, parents have the opportunity to develop closer family relationships while reading, and children see *their parents* and other adults they *love* with books in their hands. Reading takes on a whole new context for them. The key to unlock education begins to turn- in their homes, then at school.

After October 1, you can purchase your calendar/s online at www.jeandeanrif.org or order directly from Jean Dean RIF by calling Cathy Gafford, Executive Director, on 334-750-9974 or emailing jeandeanrif@gmail.com

DOES illiteracy cost all of us every year in Alabama? Does it make it hard for businesses to have needed employees? Does that then make it hard to bring businesses into our state? Does it cause the people unfortunate enough to be illiterate to suffer a lifetime of failures? Is anybody illiterate in 2016??

You bet! *Literacy is a serious issue in the United States. 1 in 4 is functionally illiterate.* That is 25% of our nation’s population. *Over 60% of prison inmates are illiterate and 85% of all juvenile offenders have trouble reading. It’s estimated that the cost of illiteracy to American business and the taxpayer is \$20 billion per year.* There is a direct correlation between illiteracy and poverty. **According to the National Center for Family Literacy, studies have shown being read to as a child and having books in the home are the 2 most important indicators of future academic success.** *“Putting books into the hands and homes of our poorest children can help solve the problem at its roots,” adds Gafford.*

Being able to continue to give books to at-risk children all over Alabama is important to Jean Dean RIF, the signature service project of the Alabama Kiwanis Foundation. Kiwanians and friends of Kiwanis have given over 525,000 children over 1.5 million books since 1991. The program welcomes volunteers, funders and other partners who care about getting books into the hands and homes of at-risk young children. The calendars are another effort to bring the “reading community” in Alabama together to help build a truly literate population in the years to come.

Close to 1000 people voted on their favorites photos for this calendar. Individuals, businesses and organizations have come together to support the effort. NOW- it’s time to show support for the theme—SEE the NEED to READ to a Child – by buying calendars and keeping them visible. That will make a positive statement all over the state. **Alabamians see the need to read to a child!**