

NEWS

2024

MISSION

Books 4 Buddies is a nonprofit organization providing (free) books, mentoring, and inspirational programs for elementary aged through high school boys in underserved areas within the Northwest Ohio area.

Books4buddies.com

The Final Chapter for Books4Buddies

Books4Buddies was conceived in 2012 by teen Toledo native Touré McCord II, grandson of Laneta Goings, who wanted to encourage reading among disadvantaged young men. Books4Buddies evolved into a (GLOBAL) nonprofit represented by a diverse group of teenage males who attend public and private high schools in the USA, Africa, Asia and Europe.

Since 2012, Books 4 Buddies has collected more than 200,000 books, through collaboration with Rotary Club International and American Cultural Education Students (ACES), that have been delivered throughout Northwest Ohio and beyond!

Books 4 Buddies was represented by "Book Ambassadors," including Touré and several other area male teenagers, who helped to promote the program at public appearances and special events that included guest speakers and outings with local leaders and celebrities.



Books4Buddies first meeting with then Mayor Mike Bell



With sad news, we are at the end of our last chapter as our Co-Founder Laneta Goings retires and Touré has moved on to his career as a video/photographer in California.

We have donated our last boxes of books which the community has graciously gifted us and *The Blade* newspaper has thankfully stored all these years.

Thank you to everyone who has been of utmost support to us all through the years (too numerable to mention all and we don't want to forget anyone) to fulfill our mission of encouraging reading and thus education and a more fulfilling future for youth.



THE BLADE/ANDY MORRISON

Toure McCord, 14, hopes to collect and distribute 1,000 donated books this summer to disadvantaged children, especially boys, through his Books 4 Buddies effort. Already, 333 books have been donated.

Teen's campaign aims to boost reading skills

Boy, 14, wants to collect, donate 1,000 books

By MEL FLANAGAN
BLADE STAFF WRITER

When Toure McCord attended elementary school in Toledo and then Atlanta, he had trouble with reading comprehension. By the time he reached sixth grade, he realized he needed to improve his skills if he wanted to keep up in school.

"My mom forced me to read out loud every day to her," 14-year-old Toure said. "After, I would tell her about what I read."

That not only improved his comprehension skills, it helped Toure realize his love for reading. This summer,

Toure hopes to cultivate that love in other young males through his Books 4 Buddies campaign.

The effort, designed by Toure with assistance from his grandmother Laneta Goings, aims to collect new and gently used books for economically disadvantaged children, particularly boys.

"When boys stop reading around second or third grade, they become distracted and get in trouble," Ms. Goings of Toledo said. "The literacy rate reflects back on the violence

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Books4Buddies Co-Founder Presented Sojourner Truth Award

Books4Buddies Co-founder Laneta Goings was presented the Maumee Bay Club of the National Association of Negro Business & Professional Women's Club, Inc., Sojourner Truth Award on April 30, 2023 at the Tamaron Country Club.

Laneta's daughters and grandchildren arrived from the west coast, along with several other family members and friends, to see her receive this prestigious award.

Laneta remarked that she didn't need recognition and enjoys what she does.

Laneta has been very involved in the community with Leadership Toledo, United Way, African American Chamber of Commerce. Vice President of the Blade Foundation, Past President of the Toledo Chapter of the Links, Inc., The Toledo Zoological Society Centennial Chair, Women of Toledo and Women in Communications, Inc., Supreme Court of Ohio Board of Commissioners, of the Clients' Security Fund and Northwest Ohio Black Media Assn. (founding member).

Laneta was also a past chair of the YWCA. It was during her administration MILESTONES was conceptualized in 1996. The award is to recognize women of Northwest Ohio who have demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities and who, through their efforts and accomplishments, have opened doors for other women to achieve their potential.

Awards/Recognition Laneta received are the Jefferson Award (one of four) Regional Winner; 1 of 15 (2015) Fiercest Sisters, a national online organization.

Laneta and her husband Bill, were also guests on the Oprah Winfrey show and Good Morning America for their "Marriage between Larks and Owls" feature.



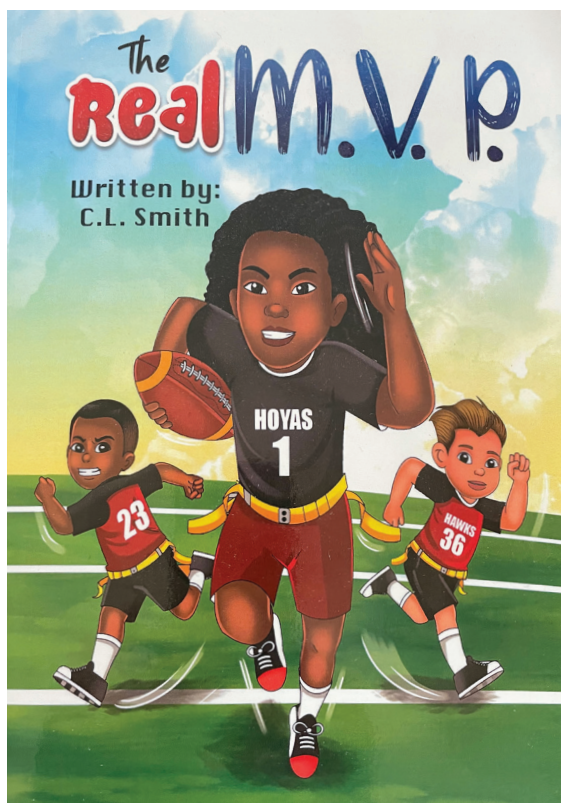
Laneta Goings accepts her Sojourner Truth Award.



Laneta's grandchildren, Touré McCord II, Vana C. Parker and Nathaniel Stroman, Jr.



Books4Buddies MENTor Christopher Smith Pens His Own Book



Our very own MENTor, Christopher Smith authored *The Real M.V.P.* this past year, to further encourage reading in young men.

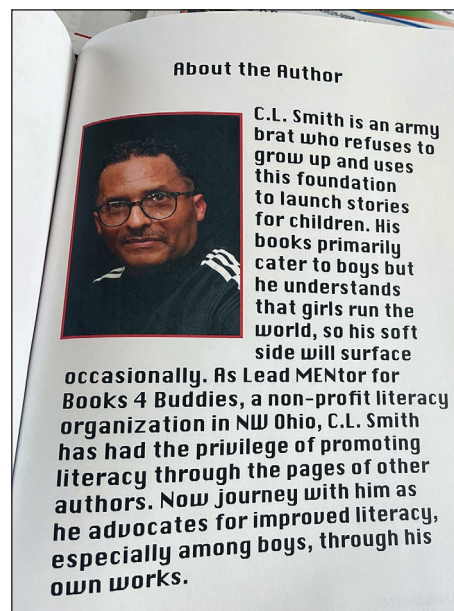
Overview:

Creighton is a beast when it comes to flag football. He is so fast, Coach Brown has nicknamed him "Flash."

In practice, it's obvious he's the best player on his team. He would probably be the best player in a game - if he would just go in.

Can a player who never plays in a game be named his team's M.V.P.? Let's huddle up and see!

The Real M.V.P. can be found at Barnes & Noble, Amazon.com and Walmart among many other book stores.



About the Author

C.L. Smith is an army brat who refuses to grow up and uses this foundation to launch stories for children. His books primarily cater to boys but he understands that girls run the world, so his soft side will surface occasionally. As Lead MENTor for Books 4 Buddies, a non-profit literacy organization in NW Ohio, C.L. Smith has had the privilege of promoting literacy through the pages of other authors. Now journey with him as he advocates for improved literacy, especially among boys, through his own works.

A Blast from the Past!

We made the *The Blade* cartoon section in 2012.

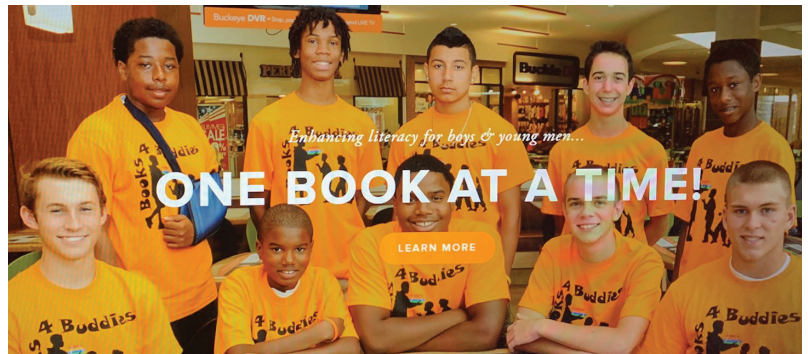
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Books4Buddies Alumni Ambassadors

We're proud of our Ambassadors and their accomplishments!

Here's where some of them are today.



L. Touré McCord, II, Books4Buddies Co-Founder, now lives in Los Angeles California and is a freelance writer.



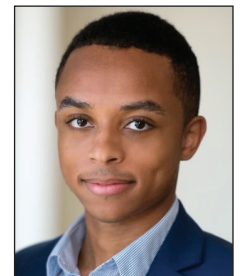
Jordan Topoleski, Sylvania Southview grad, is Co-Founder of a tech company called Arkive, in San Francisco. He balances his time in California and Portugal.



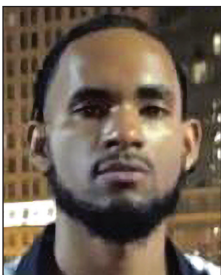
Mondo Arce, is a senior at the Ohio State University, majoring in finance. He also works at Total Quality Logistics in Columbus, Ohio as an account executive.



Birama Ndiaye our Senegalese Ambassador, is now an engineer in forestry, environment and management of natural resources in Senegal.



Malcolm Johnson is currently based in Los Angeles, CA and works in finance at J.P. Morgan. His hobbies are chess, hiking, and running. He is interested in artificial intelligence and virtual reality.



Jalen Wilson, a 2012 ambassador, graduated from Tiffin University with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and a Minor in Marketing. He earned his Master of Science in Criminal Justice. Jalen recently became a proud Columbus homeowner.

"Books 4 Buddies has taught me the importance of reading and how beneficial it is to utilize the tools and resources around you to become successful. I truly think that the organization has not only made a difference to the youth who have been served but has had a positive impact on the community showing that there are people who care about them and are willing to take the time out and not only teach but encourage."

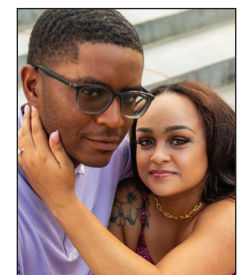
- Jalen Wilson



Books4Buddies GLOBAL Ambassador Andrew Urritia graduated with a degree in Economics from Kent State University. His interests are real estate and fitness. He worked as an executive assistant to Lucas County Commissioner Anita Lopez.



Scottie Seymour graduated with a masters from The Ohio State University has been living in Charlotte, NC, for the past 3 years. He work for Wells Fargo as an Investment Banking Analyst in the Leveraged Finance Group.



Brandon Jackson, a Founding B4B member, is caddying professionally at Augusta National as well as on the LPGA tour. He is looking forward to a June 7th wedding with his fiancé Jasmine.

Books4Buddies Alumni Ambassadors Continued from page 4



Ivan Dye, Jr. graduated from Rice University with a Masters of Architecture in May 2023. He moved to San Francisco, California to join the architecture team at Butler Armsden Architects. At Butler Armsden, he works as a Junior Designer, helping design single-family residences in the Bay Area.

“As I reflect on the past decade of Books4Buddies, I am most proud of its growth. Through the years successive cohorts of Book Ambassadors have encouraged literacy and provided reading materials both locally and globally. Moreover, in the spirit of inclusivity, an intentionality towards building up young boys in their personal journey toward literary competency never compromised a mindfulness to provide reading resources for all youths in need. These two achievements represent, to me, a consistent generosity that characterizes what it means to be a

servant leader. I will forever be grateful to be one of Books4Buddies’ founding members. My fellow Ambassadors remain my friends. And the B4B Board remains some of my biggest supporters and trusted mentors. I am realizing now that the phrase Mrs. Goings coined is not limited to the context of the Books4Buddies organization, but is instead an application for life: ‘Once an Ambassador, always an Ambassador!’”



Mamadou Sy is a Books4Buddies GLOBAL Ambassador Senegal. He is currently a junior at the University of Toledo, College of Engineering majoring in Information Technology.

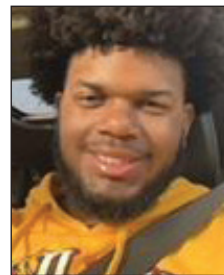
Best Wishes to all our ambassadors on your future endeavors!



Cousins Justin Ross & Nathaniel Stroman

Justin Ross is a 2022 Ohio State University graduate. Justin’s degree is in the College of Engineering and Aviation. Justin is a pilot for a major airline.

Books4Buddies GLOBAL Ambassador **Nathaniel M. Stroman, Jr.** is a Grand Canyon University graduate with a degree in Sports Management and a minor in law. He completed his degree in 3½ years, inspired by his cousin, Justin Ross.



Justin Teamer is sophomore at Bowling Green State University, majoring in physical and health education, minoring in coaching. He is a student assistant for the BGSU football team, a member of the organization “Kings of Color” and an active participant in intramural basketball and football.



Jesus G Avila IV “I recently mentioned Books4Buddies to a coworker with elementary grade students. As January 15 passed, I expressed to coworkers and family the importance of education. Dr. King sacrificed so much to prioritize the power of knowledge as an activist and will continue to therefore. Most importantly as a father I teach character to my son Marcello of 7 years. After graduating high school in 2016, I continued my education through the United States Air Force, following service in Operation Inherent Resolve and many other missions.

One contract and tour has turned into memorable work experience as an aircraft technician. In conclusion, now I have boots back on the ground in Toledo, Ohio. I will continue to use my education in computer and mechanical science to build properties for locals in need of assistance housing

and subcontracting and starting KTC Home Improvements LLC. I will finalize my degree at local institutions including Owens Community College, later transferring to the University of Toledo. I specialize in emergency response and general contracting. As an ambassador, I respectfully thank those before me who helped create a pathway of education and community. Grateful for Books4Buddies!”



Dorian Myers, Jr. with his father Dorian, Sr.

Dorian Myers, Jr. attended the University of Northwestern Ohio in Lima, where he was a member of the basketball team. He is taking a leave from school to focus on family as sadly, his father Dorian Sr., recently passed away. Dorian plays men’s flag football and works full time at Circle K in Oregon, Ohio.

Farewell and Thank You to our 2023 GLOBAL Graduates



Brandon Dolsey, Ottawa Hills grad now at Michigan State University



Ian English, Maumee Valley Country Day grad now at Miami of Ohio College



Benjamin Williams, Ottawa Hills grad, now at Missouri Science and Technology

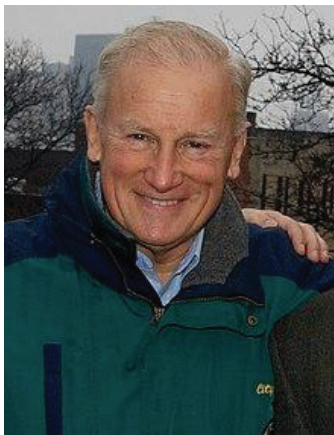
**We've made a lot of friends along the way.
Thank you to all our volunteers and supporters!**



Laneta Goings, Dr. Romulus Durant, TPS PROUD; Barb Eikost, community friend; Pete Hildebrandt, retired educator, librarian and Books4Buddies board member and Terry Crosby, Ambassador for Taylor Automotive



"Pass the Mic for Books4Buddies!" says Andre Page (center with plaque), Books4Buddies treasurer and member of Alpha Phi Alpha. At Birmingham Terrace, Andre accepted a Books4Buddies Extra Mile certificate which reads, "Leading/Serving by example, many deeds, scholarship, and love for all mankind."



"Books4Buddies – what a difference you have made! 200 teenagers, now prepared to make the world a better place. And, how this world needs you! Godspeed."

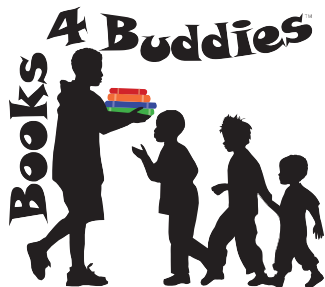
– Carty Finkbeiner
Former Three Term Mayor, City of Toledo

Special Thanks also to Mel Honig



Mel has been a huge influence with Books4Buddies to us throughout the years. Mel is a member of Rotary Club International (RCI) and exemplifies their "Service Above Self" motto to the billionth degree! Thanks Mel!

For our final distribution of our books, Mel with Books4Buddies collaborated with Rotary Club International, gifting close to 2,500 books to the Believe Center. The books benefited kids attending the annual Children Services Board - Trunk or Treat on the grounds of Libbey High School in Toledo.



Teachers rejoiced in getting free books at *The Blade* with (left) Books4Buddies Christopher Smith and Kirk Walters, former *Blade* Cartoonist.