



Media Advisory

NEW CANADIANS SHARE READING SKILLS DURING CANADA-WIDE ADOPT-A-READER CAMPAIGN

OTTAWA, FEBRUARY 16TH, 2019

WHAT

Immigrant mothers and their children will demonstrate the importance of reading during a celebration that launches the Mothers Matter Centre's fifth annual Adopt-a-Reader campaign. The two-week, national campaign aims to increase parent-child reading time as a critical way to spark early literacy among refugee and newcomer mothers across Canada.

Adopt-a-Reader is sponsored by the Mothers Matter Centre – Proud Home of the HIPPY Program (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) in Canada, First Book Canada and supported by TD Bank Group. HIPPY families across the country “adopt” non-HIPPY families in their local communities to participate in the campaign.

More than 1,800 families in six provinces will participate this year, with an expected 415,000 minutes of reading aloud to children across the nation.

You will meet Boushra, an immigrant from Saudi-Arabia. Now settled in Ottawa, Boushra will describe how the Adopt-a-Reader campaign sparked “hope for [her] and [her] kids to have a good future, a good education.”

First Book Canada is providing 3,700 free books to participants across Canada during the campaign.

WHO

Interview and photo opportunities:

- **Boushra** – newcomer to Canada who now teaches reading skills to other families
- **Monique Best** — representative of Adopt-a-Reader at Vanier Community Centre (*no video*)
- **Ottawa newcomer and refugee families** – participants in Adopt-a-Reader campaign



WHEN

Saturday, February 16th, 2019

4-5pm, media availability

4.00-4.30: Picture book reading

4.30-5.00: Festivities

WHERE

Ottawa Public Library – St-Laurent Branch

515 Côté St

Ottawa, ON

K1K 0Z8

STATISTICS

- Gaps in children's early learning can emerge by 18 months of age. Luckily, there is a simple way to foster early literacy: reading daily to children from birth. Still, fewer than 70 per cent of Canadian children between three to five years of age are read to on a daily basis.
- By age four, children from affluent families have heard an average of 45 million words; middle-class children have heard 26 million words; and children living in poverty have heard only 13 million words. That's a 32-million-word socio-economic gap.
- Since its debut in Canada, the HIPPY program has expanded to 25 sites in seven provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia.
- The program features a peer home visitor system that enables mothers, who may be hard to reach due to social isolation, poverty, language or other cultural issues, to feel comfortable participating in the program.
- Well-trained Home Visitors deliver books and 30 weeks of high-quality curriculum activities directly to parents, who then work 15 to 20 minutes a day with their own three- to five-year old children.

Media Contact:

Julia Cousens, Communications Coordinator Mothers Matter Centre

jcousens@hippycanada.ca

Office Phone: 604.608.4211 // Cell Phone: 778.956.7495

For more information:

www.mothersmattercentre.ca

www.firstbookcanada.org