

Reading is a gift — and we can all help give it



Neal Rubin, *The Detroit News* 6:58 a.m. EDT March 23, 2015



(Photo: Neal Rubin / The Detroit News)

You are never too young to have your mother read you a book. Probably never too old, either, but in this case we're talking young, very young, as in, 6 ½ incredibly adorable weeks. Dalayna Stepp knows that Savannah is listening.

"The expressions, the reactions," says Stepp, nestled with her baby in a rocking chair at the amazing Southfield Public Library. "It's extremely important for them."

Stepp and her husband, Alfred, have learned that from experience: Savannah is their fifth book-loving child. Researchers have proven it with any number of studies. The more you read to your kids, the better off they'll be. They'll listen better, they'll learn better, they'll have larger vocabularies, and they'll focus more sharply.

As early as Kindergarten, they'll have an edge on the kids who haven't been read to — and that's why we launched Today's Readers, Tomorrow's Leaders, our March-long quest to put books in the lives and laps of some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Along with the United Way for Southeastern Michigan and Hiller's Markets, we're raising money to buy books for children aged 5 and younger who otherwise might not see any in their homes.

You can donate at detroitnews.com/readers, in the checkout lane at the seven Hiller's stores, or with the coupon accompanying today's column. One donor at Hiller's will win a \$500 gift card. Thousands of kids will get a gift that's longer lasting.

Dana Holding Corp., EuroAmerica Design and Clark Hill PLC have stepped in as contributors. So has Bookstock (see bookstock.info), Michigan's largest used book and media sale, coming to Laurel Park Place in Livonia April 26-May 3.

They're hoping to create children like the Stepps, who treat excursions to the library like visits to Disney World.

YES!
I would like to give a child
in need the gift of reading!



ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK FOR \$ _____
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____
EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Make checks payable to
United Way for Southeastern Michigan
and mail to:
The Detroit News
Today's Readers, Tomorrow's Leaders
160 W. Fort Street, Detroit MI 48226

You can donate at detroitnews.com/readers, in the checkout lane at the seven Hiller's stores, or with this coupon. (Photo: The Detroit News)