



Read Across America: Activity Planning Ideas

Every year on March 3 and 19, children are encouraged to read and remind the people in their life to read to or with them. The days empower children to participate in the conversation about their own literacy.

You have probably heard that it takes a village to raise a child. On National Read Across America Day and International Read to Me Day, anyone in a child's community is encouraged to read to them. It doesn't matter who does the reading; all that matters is that anyone in the child's life reads to them on a regular basis.

Children who are read to 3 to 4 times a week have reading ages that are six months ahead of those who only get read to once or twice a week. Reading to children everyday nearly doubles their progress. This means these children are one year ahead of other children. Further, children who read regularly and have developed strong reading skills perform better in school and have a healthier self-image. They become lifelong learners and sought-after employees. Reading aloud with children at an early age is the most effective way to help them expand their vocabulary and recognize written words.

Other benefits of reading with children include:

- Teaching children about the world around them.
- Helping improve their vocabulary and language skills.
- Developing their imagination.
- Helping them develop empathy.

Children love being read to and love reading to others, so why not enjoy this activity with them? They will greatly benefit from it if you do.

The Raising Readers fraternal campaign focuses on ways Modern Woodmen members can promote children's literacy in our nation's communities. **In the first quarter (January-March), let's work together to raise readers** by reading to and with children in our communities. (See the [campaign toolkit](#) for complete details about the 2023 national fraternal campaign.)

Below, find **suggestions on selecting a group to work with** for your activity, plus tips for **hosting the activity** and **activity ideas for each category**. For details on Modern Woodmen's service project and Hometown Hero activities, as well as premier requirements, refer to the 2023 Fraternal Leader Handbook.

Selecting a recipient

1. Select a group that:

- Is known for working with children.
- Your members will enthusiastically support.

2. Include your leadership team and others as you plan. Some members may have connections to organizations in your community.

3. Make an impact locally. Select from groups like:

- Schools
- Libraries
- Childhood centers
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Afterschool programs
- Summer day camps
- Mother's Day Out programs
- Parent/child play groups
- Children's literacy organizations
- Homeless shelters
- Hospitals
- Homeschool associations

4. Showcase what the organization does for children in your community. Ask your recipient to share with members at the activity what their organization's efforts do for children's literacy and how members are helping make an impact with this activity.

Share your impact for a chance to win!

30 leaders will win a 12-month Amazon Prime subscription (or Amazon gift card of equal value).

After reporting the activity, complete the [Q1 Raising Readers Impact Survey](#) to enter your name in the prize drawing!

Hosting the activity

When selecting a group to work with, be sure to find out how many children will be present at the time of the activity and what their ages are. This will help you plan ahead so each member who signs up for the activity has a child to read to/with and an age-appropriate book to bring.

If you're looking for book ideas, here are some classics for children of all ages:

- Charlotte's Web by E.B White
- Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown
- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl
- The Complete Tales of Winnie the Pooh by A.A. Milne
- The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams
- Oh, the Places You'll Go! By Dr. Seuss
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
- The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

Remember to order supplies, such as the Raising Readers Bookmark (F-621) and Raising Readers Hometown Hero Card (F-623).

At the activity, have members read one-on-one with children and hand out the Raising Readers Bookmarks (F-621). If the activity is a Hometown Hero, have the children sign the Raising Readers Hometown Hero card (F-623). (See the "Activity idea add-ons" below for more ideas.)

After the activity, be sure to submit your report on time and complete the Q1 survey to be entered into the prize drawing.

Activity idea add-ons

This activity can be a service project or Hometown Hero, depending on what works best for your chapter/club. Before requesting the activity, decide what type of activity it is. You could keep it simple or go above and beyond by adding on to the activity with some of the following activity ideas.

Note that if you add any of these “extras” to the activity, at a minimum, members need to read to children in your community.

Service project

- Donate “reading buddies” (stuffed animals) to the children so they have someone to read to after the activity.
- Bring unstuffed animals for children to make their own reading buddies: [Make Your Own Stuffed Animal](#)
- Bring Summit chapter members together with their grandchildren and young neighbors for them to read together.
- For a social distant activity, ask members to record themselves reading a children’s book and donate the recordings to foster children or children in a shelter.

Hometown Hero*

- Salute a local children’s librarian or volunteer known for read-alouds.
- Honor a local children’s author and ask him/her to read aloud to the children. Consider providing copies of one of his/her books to the children in attendance.
- Have the children sign the Raising Readers Hometown Hero Card (F-623) before giving it to the honoree.
- Bring a book-shaped cake, cookies or a [literacy-themed snack](#) to the event.
- Give a small gift to the honoree, such as a [fun inexpensive book-themed item](#).
- Ask members to help create a gift basket for the honoree.

*Be sure to have your Hometown Hero recipient determined ahead of time.

Youth club members

- Pair young members who can read with younger non-readers at the event. Dub them “reading buddies.”
- Younger members can help by handing out bookmarks and snacks before joining a reading group to listen to the read-aloud.
- Ask young members to bring their adult family members to the activity and a copy of their favorite children’s book to read. After the families read together at the activity, collect the books to donate to a local children’s organization. This is the perfect opportunity to carve out time for families to read together and remind them why it’s important before gifting the book to another child.
- Hold the activity at a local animal shelter and have young members read to the animals. Create “reading buddies” for non-readers.