

# America Cares

## National Reading Program Needs Your Help

(NAPSA)—A national reading program that has provided free books and literacy resources to the nation's youngest and most at-risk children for more than 40 years may be reaching its final chapter unless it gets some help.

### Program To Be Eliminated

The president's proposed budget for fiscal year 2009 eliminates Reading Is Fundamental's (RIF) Inexpensive Book Distribution Program. Unless Congress reinstates \$25.5 million in funding for this program, RIF would not be able to distribute 16 million books annually to children in need of developing better reading skills. In 2007, RIF gave away books to 4.6 million underserved children at nearly 20,000 locations nationally. It has been funded by Congress and six administrations since 1975 without interruption.

According to Carol H. Rasco, president and CEO of Reading Is Fundamental, "The impact of the president's budget would be devastating to the 4.6 million children and their families who receive free books and reading encouragement from local RIF programs."

RIF programs in schools, child care centers, migrant programs, military bases and other locations serve children from low-



**Turning a page for 4.6 million underserved children is a book distribution program that is in danger of losing its funding.**

income families, children with disabilities, foster and homeless children, and children without access to libraries. Since its founding in 1966, RIF's programs have played an important role in improving literacy in this country. The U.S. Department of Education has shown that the number of books in a child's home is a significant predictor of academic achievement.

### How You Can Help

Anyone wishing to send a message to President Bush, their senators or representatives about the importance of allowing RIF programs to continue can do so by going to [RIF.org](http://RIF.org) and clicking on "Contact Congress Now."