

Ferst Readers of Carroll County: 20 Years of Impact and Community Collaboration

Ferst Readers of Carroll County was founded in 2004 as a grassroots initiative born out of a shared commitment to early childhood literacy. What began as a community collaboration has grown into a vital program impacting thousands of local families.

The seeds were planted by the Carrollton Civic Woman's Club who contacted Daniel Jackson, then Chair of the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, to call an initial meeting of community members on June 17, 2004, to introduce the program. The enthusiasm quickly spread, culminating in a community-wide meeting on July 23, 2004, with the Civic Woman's Club volunteering to undertake the organizational process. By September 29, 2004, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed, marking the official start of Ferst Readers in Carroll County.

Momentum built rapidly. On October 26, 2004, the first presentation was delivered to the Rotary Club, which also provided the program's first donation that same day. Media support followed with the first mention in the local paper on November 4, 2004, and the first feature article on November 14, 2004. The program secured its first grant submission and its first business-sponsored fundraiser by December 2004.

By early 2005, Ferst Readers had secured its first grant award and held its first volunteer training on February 24. Just two months later, the organization reached a major milestone, securing \$30,000 in seed money. This achievement was announced during the first press conference on April 12, 2005. The momentum continued with the first registration campaign in May, leading to the first delivery of books to Carroll County children in June 2005.

The program's growth was further fueled by a Challenge Grant issued on October 15, 2005, and successfully matched on February 14, 2006.

Today, 20 years later, Ferst Readers of Carroll County proudly serves an average of 2,700 children annually, providing free, age-appropriate books directly to their homes. In total, over 600,000 books have been delivered since the program's inception.

What began as a simple conversation in 2004 has blossomed into a lasting legacy of literacy, community partnership, and hope for generations of Carroll County families. This summer we will host a Celebration for the 20 Years of Ferst Readers of Carroll County.



Fashion Ferst:

Annual Fall/Winter Fashion Luncheon Raises Nearly \$35,000 for Ferst Readers of Carroll County

On October 30, 2024, the community came together for a stylish and heartwarming afternoon at the Annual Fall/Winter Fashion Luncheon, benefiting Ferst Readers of Carroll County. This annual fundraiser raised an impressive \$35,000, supporting the organization's mission to provide free books to children in need and foster early childhood literacy across the region.

Guests enjoyed a delightful lunch while viewing stunning collections showcased in three fashionable categories: Holiday Happenings, Cocktail Hour, and Green with Envy. Each collection offered a preview of the season's top trends, from festive holiday looks to elegant cocktail attire and bold, envy-worthy green pieces.

A special thank you goes out to Dillard's Douglasville for their invaluable support in making the event a success. Their partnership helped elevate the luncheon and ensured a memorable experience for all in attendance.

Thanks to the generosity of the community, Ferst Readers of Carroll County is able to continue its important work, gifting books and inspiring a love of reading in young children across the county.



Date coming soon!
Fashion Ferst: October 2025

2nd Annual Book Character Contest:

A Record-Breaking Success!

The 2024 Ferst Readers of Carroll County Book Character Contest exceeded all expectations, raising over \$12,000 to support early childhood literacy! This incredible achievement would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and generosity of our community.

A special thank you to our amazing contestants—3:16 Healthcare Owner, Dr. Allison Key; Georgia West Realtor Paula Waters; Carroll County Schools Superintendent, Scott Cowart; Temple Mayor, Michael Johnson; Carrollton City Schools Superintendent, Dr. Mark Albertus; Carrollton City Mayor, Betty Cason; UWG First Lady, Dr. Tressa Kelly; Jules & James CEO, Alison Grooms; UWG Head Football Coach, Joel Taylor; and Bowdon Head Football Coach, Rich Findley—who brought their favorite book characters to life and rallied support for this important cause. Their dedication, along with the generosity of our donors and event sponsors, will help provide free books to children across Carroll County, fostering a love of reading from an early age.

We are grateful for everyone who participated, donated, and cheered on our contestants. Your support helps ensure that every child in Carroll County has access to quality books and the opportunity to build a brighter future. Here's to another year of inspiring young readers!



Dr. Mark Albertus
Superintendent Carrollton City Schools
Hector



Betty Cason
Mayor City of Carrollton
Busy Betty



Scott Cowart
Superintendent Carroll County Schools
Prince Charming



Rich Findley
Head Football Coach Bowdon High School
Mr. Incredible



Alison Grooms
CEO Jules and James Boutique
Rosie



Michael Johnson
Mayor City of Temple
The Tin Man



Dr. Tressa Kelly
First Lady University of West Georgia
Wolfie



Dr. Allison Key
Owner 3:16 Healthcare
Elvis Presley



Joel Taylor
Head Football Coach
University of West Georgia
Waldo



Paula Waters
Realtor Georgia West Realty
The Very Hungry Caterpillar



Support Early Literacy: Your Donation Makes a Difference in a Child's Future

At Ferst Readers of Carroll County, our mission is simple but vital: to develop literacy among young children. By providing books and resources to children, we foster the early reading experiences that are crucial for success in school and in life. These early moments of learning shape the future of our community by helping children become successful students and, ultimately, productive members of our workforce.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, we rely on the generosity of donors like you to make a lasting impact. Your support ensures that every child in Carroll County has the opportunity to start their journey with the power of reading. Please consider donating today and help us unlock a brighter future for our children and our community.

Together, we can build a foundation for success! Thank you for your support.



BY MAIL

Send your donation by mail to:
Ferst Readers of Carroll County
P.O. Box 1922
Carrollton, GA 30112



ONLINE

Visit our website at
carrollferst.org
and click on the donate button.
One-time and recurring options are available!



venmo



PayPal



2,218

KIDS SERVED

26,619

BOOKS MAILED

\$153,841

FUNDS RAISED

2024 DONORS

Platinum: \$5,000+

Alice Huff Richards Foundation
Carroll EMC
Community Impact Grant
Verida

Gold: \$1,001-\$4,999

Carrollton City Schools
Carrollton Civic Womens Club
Carrollton Orthopedic Clinic - OrthoWest
Carrollton Presbyterian Church
Dawn Breakers Rotary Club
Debbie Rambo
Jill Pierce
Karen Hartley
Kathleen Grzedsinski
Martha Saunders
Melanie McClellan
Paula Waters
Penny Ayers
SMI
Southeastern Insurance Association
Tanner Health
United Community Bank

Silver: \$500-\$1,000

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