



## Book'em: Breaking Down Barriers to Literacy

### The Opportunity

Book'em seeks \$100,000 to expand and ensure accessibility of our Book Bus program—the only nonprofit mobile book ownership initiative in Davidson County.

This two-year capital investment will:

- Retrofit our current bus for wheelchair accessibility
- Add a second, larger ADA-compliant bus
- Make thousands more children owners of books they choose for themselves
- Ensure no child is excluded from this magical experience due to mobility challenges and capacity barriers

### Who We Are

For 36 years, Book'em has been Nashville's largest provider of free books for children ages 0–18.

Each year, we:

- Serve **22,000+ youth** who own few, if any books
- Distribute **120,000+ books** for ownership that young people choose for themselves
- Partner with **180+ schools & nonprofits** to increase book ownership among youth
- Train, place, and supervise **300 reading role model volunteers** for PreK and elementary classrooms

### Our Reach:

- 75% BIPOC Youth
- 31% Limited English Proficiency
- 14% Children with Disabilities
- 5% Children with Mobility Issues
- 75% Economically Disadvantaged
- 11% Housing Insecure

### Our Focus:

We provide books that **reflect our children's identities and experiences** – stories they **choose** themselves and proudly take home to **own**.

### The Book Bus: Proven Impact in 18 Months

Launched in April 2024, our Book Bus has:

- Made **110 school & community visits**
- Distributed **17,000+ books**
- Reached **6,000+ youth** in underserved areas
- Created joyful, empowering literacy experiences

Unlike government-run bookmobiles, our Book Bus is **community-centered, independently funded**, and serves the **largest geographic area in Tennessee** without municipal support.



## The Problem

Despite its success, our current Book Bus faces limitations:

1. **Accessibility:** Children with mobility challenges cannot board the bus.
2. **Capacity:** High-demand events exceed our space and inventory.
3. **Demand:** We can't meet growing requests across Davidson County.

## Our Solution: \$100,000 Two-Year Plan

- **\$35,000** – Retrofit current bus with ADA-compliant wheelchair lift
- **\$45,000** – Purchase ADA-accessible full-size bus with HVAC & expanded capacity
- **\$10,000** – Convert new bus into a vibrant mobile library
- **\$10,000** – Hire part-time CDL driver to operate both buses

## Measurable Impact

With Impact100 support, we will:

- Increase visits from **75 to 100+ annually**
- Serve **3,000+ additional children each year**
- Ensure **100% accessibility** for children with mobility challenges
- Double capacity for high-demand events
- Reach more communities across Davidson County

## Metrics Tracked:

- Children served
- Books distributed
- Visits completed
- ADA lift usage & family feedback
- Partner & educator surveys

## Sustainability

This is a **one-time capital investment** with a lasting impact. Buses and accessibility upgrades are permanent assets. Ongoing operations are supported by:

- Proven fundraising success (Frist Foundation, Bridgestone, Delta Dental, HCA Healthcare Foundation, etc.)
- Strong donor retention & diversified revenue streams
- 180+ active community partnerships

Driver, maintenance, and book costs will be integrated into our annual operating budget.

## Why This Matters

Reading transforms lives—boosting academic success, mental health, and opportunity. For children facing poverty, instability, or stigma, stories offer healing and hope.

The Book Bus makes literacy **joyful, inclusive, and equitable**. Children choose books that reflect their identities and experiences.

**Your investment removes barriers—literally and figuratively.**