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**RAISING A READER JOINS FORCES WITH PENNSYLVANIA MASONS
FOR STATEWIDE ROLLOUT OF CHILDREN'S LITERACY PROGRAM
IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA**

**Masons raise funds to bring literacy program
to more than 2,500 families throughout Pennsylvania**

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 29, 2016 -- In their continuing support for communities across Pennsylvania, the Masons have provided more than a quarter million dollars to be used for a statewide program that will improve the literacy of children throughout Pennsylvania. The program will be coordinated by Raising A Reader, a national nonprofit organization that provides resources and guidance for families to implement home-based literacy routines.

The Masons of Pennsylvania have donated \$270,000, which will be used to bring the Raising A Reader program to approximately 2,500 children and their families. The program will be implemented through more than 60 public elementary school classrooms across Pennsylvania.

“As Freemasons, we understand the value of family and the importance of education,” said Raymond Dietz, Grand Master of Masons of Pennsylvania. “More importantly, we believe in helping those who are less fortunate; nearly 80 percent of the families we will help through this program are at or below the poverty level. Partnering with Raising A Reader allows us to commit our resources to something that is family-oriented and important to the community.”

Children who participate in the program will be given a Raising A Reader book bag with several age-appropriate books to take home and read with their parents. Every week the bags will be rotated into children's homes, with approximately 100 books being brought into the child's home every year. The program will also provide support and guidance to help families develop, practice and maintain home-based literacy habits.

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“The Masons of Pennsylvania have enabled us to put a program in place that will have a significant impact on the literacy of children throughout Pennsylvania,” said Gabrielle Miller, Ed.D., president and CEO of Raising A Reader. “Thousands of children will have access to books and, more importantly, their parents will have the tools necessary to teach their children to become readers.”

Freemasonry is the oldest, largest and most widely known fraternity in the world, based on the cardinal virtues of brotherly love, charity and truth. Its roots can be traced back hundreds of years in Europe. Today, there are more than 105,000 members statewide, 1.2 million members nationally and 3.5 million members worldwide. Freemasons contribute more than \$2 million a day to charity. In Pennsylvania, the Masonic Charities include the Masonic Temple; The Masonic Library and Museum of Pennsylvania; the Masonic Villages in Dallas, Elizabethtown, Lafayette Hill, Sewickley and Warminster, Pa.; and the Pennsylvania Masonic Youth Foundation. For more information about Pennsylvania Masonry, including how to join, visit pamasons.org or call 215-988-1901.

Raising A Reader is a 501c3 charitable organization dedicated to helping families develop, practice and maintain literacy habits for children ages 0-8 that are critical for a child’s success in school and in life. The program is evidence-based, with more than 32 independent evaluations showing that Raising A Reader significantly improves language and literacy skills, cognitive development, communication and comprehension skills, school readiness and social competence. Raising A Reader is implemented through a network of community partners that comprise more than 2,500 locations across the country including public school systems, libraries, afterschool programs, community agencies and other organizations both public and private. Headquartered in Redwood City, California, Raising A Reader was founded in 1999 and has served more than 1.25 million families nationwide. More information is available at RaisingAReader.org, @RARnational (Twitter) and [RaisingAReaderNational](https://www.facebook.com/RaisingAReaderNational) (Facebook).

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