



**RELEASE**

### **BOOK DRIVE TO BENEFIT LOCAL CHILDREN**

*WPSU-TV and RSVP of Centre County are organizing the **Have a Heart Book Drive** during the month of February to benefit summer reading programs for local children.*

**UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. (Feb. 1, 2007)** — WPSU-TV and RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) of Centre County are teaming up to sponsor the **Have a Heart Book Drive** to benefit local summer reading programs for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. The drive will run throughout the month of February with drop-off locations throughout Centre County.

During the **Have a Heart Book Drive**, members of the community are asked to donate new or gently used books for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. Gently used books should be free of writing, scribbling and names. Pages should not be torn or stickered. Collection bins will be placed at various locations throughout Centre County. Books will be distributed through local schools and public libraries to support their summer reading programs. For more information on the drive and drop-off locations, visit [wpsu.org/bookdrive](http://wpsu.org/bookdrive).

Books can be dropped off at:

- Barnes & Nobles on the Benner Pike
- Centre Hall Senior Center
- Howard Elementary School Administration Office
- Mountaintop Elementary School Administration Office
- Port Matilda Elementary School Administration Office
- Rebersburg Senior Center
- Snow Shoe Elementary School Administration Office
- Snow Shoe Senior Center
- State College Women's Club
- Willowbank Building Lobby in Bellefonte
- WPSU-TV Lobby in the Outreach Building in Innovation Park

Monetary donations and gift cards from Barnes & Noble will also be accepted during the drive for the purchase of new books. Checks and gift cards should be mailed to WPSU Book Drive, 120 Outreach Building, University Park, Pa. 16802. Checks should be made out to The Pennsylvania State University.

"When I started my position in 2004, I had a lot to learn," said Dr. Babs Bengtson, director of educational services at WPSU. "One of the things that was surprising to learn was that many homes in our viewing area do not have any books. We, both WPSU and RSVP, are committed to changing that statistic and want all children to be able to own one or more books. Encouraging children to read, learn, and explore through the world of books is one of the most wonderful and important parts of my job."

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as "the Nation's Report Card," found that that 64 percent of Pennsylvania students read at only a basic level or below. Through projects such as the **Have a Heart Book Drive** and programs such as "Reading Rainbow," the beloved public television series that inspires a lifelong love of reading, WPSU-TV and its community partners hope to encourage and inspire the love of reading and education in central Pennsylvania's youth.

"A book in the hands of a child becomes an adventure, a learning experience, an escape, a good friend, and a tool to better understand and deal with the world," said Bonnie Everett, director of RSVP. "Most of us are fortunate enough to remember having books of our own when we were kids, but many children in this area may never have that memory unless we reach out to them. This program is our opportunity to share the joy and value of reading."

RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) of Centre County has been connecting active adult volunteers, 55 and better, with volunteer opportunities at 120 non-profit agencies throughout Centre County for the past 18 years. RSVP of Centre County is a part of the Corporation for National & Community Service. RSVP was founded in 1985 through the support of the Centre County Commissioners and the Centre County Office of Aging. More information is available at [www.co.centre.pa.us/rsvp](http://www.co.centre.pa.us/rsvp).

WPSU serves central Pennsylvania with programming, educational services and community outreach. The public media services produce, acquire and distribute programs that address local interests and reflect the diverse cultural, political, geographic and demographic characteristics of an audience within central Pennsylvania.

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