

For Immediate Release  
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**RSVP**  
Mobilizing Central Oregon  
Volunteers 55 Years and Older

**Together, we made it happen— one hour at a time.**

Bend Oregon (6/11).. **RSVP** (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program of Deschutes County) announced today it will present a summary on the RSVP Read Together Books & Bears project on Saturday, June 13 at OfficeMax in the Forum Shopping Center in Bend at 10:00am.

“The first year of the Annual Books & Bears program sponsored by Rotary of Greater Bend was amazing,” said director Marie Phillis. The amount of books gathered exceeded our expectations for a first year project to give books to disadvantaged children under 10 years old.

In just two weeks, 50 red barrels at designated drop off points (May 1 through May 15) collected 8,986 books. We relied on 45 community volunteers who helped check barrels and prepared donated books for distribution. Every donated book was inspected and a special bookmark added. This process involved hours of volunteer time reviewing every book, erasing scribbles, cleaning and adding book plates. The good news --8,356 gently used and new books were collected and distributed to 3,417 disadvantaged children in Deschutes County.

The ratio of books to children in middle income families is 13 books for every child. In low income neighborhoods the ratio is 1 book for every 300 children. “With RSVP Books & Bears we wanted to make sure less advantaged children in Deschutes County had the opportunity to own their own books and encourage reading through the summer,” said Phillis. And most of the books gathered were in beautiful condition.

Every community partner, business and volunteer hour made the difference in the 2009 Books & Bears project. Together, we made it happen— one hour at a time. There are still many ways to contribute in 2010 and RSVP is committed to connecting new volunteers to a meaningful service and being a source for free “read aloud” books for children in need through an annual book drive.

For more information about volunteering with **RSVP**, visit [www.rsvpco.org](http://www.rsvpco.org) or contact us at 541-548-8817. You may also email [marie@rsvpco.org](mailto:marie@rsvpco.org)...

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