



## **CRACKER BARREL INTRODUCES ROCKIN' READER® LITERACY PROGRAM**

*MCA recording artist Josh Turner supports the goal of 15,000 hours of reading time with children*

**LEBANON, TENN** (February 11, 2009) – Cracker Barrel Old Country Store® has developed an elementary school literacy program that's helping teachers and adult volunteers build caring and literacy in their communities. The Rockin' Reader® program is now operating in 122 schools in seven states, and the results so far are impressive. In the first semester of the 2008-09 school year, the Rockin' Reader partner schools reported that 1,800 volunteers had contributed more than 5,300 hours of reading time with children. The first semester total is a good start to the program achieving its first year goal of generating 15,000 volunteer hours of reading time with children.

To build support for the program, MCA recording artist Josh Turner will read his favorite children's books on February 12 when he visits Nashville's Cole Elementary School, one of Cracker Barrel's Rockin' Reader schools. Turner's association with Cracker Barrel started in 2007 with the release of the *Josh Turner: Live At The Ryman* CD. Cracker Barrel has also helped start a Rockin' Reader program at Turner's hometown school, Hannah-Pamplico Elementary School in South Carolina.

In other activities to build awareness about the program, Cracker Barrel executives will participate in "Read Me Day" activities to be held later this month at Glenn Enhanced Option School in Nashville. The company will also donate the Rockin' Reader program to a Nashville-area YMCA pre-school program to help start a library for kids and volunteers.

"Rockin' Reader is delivering on its commitment to build caring and literacy in the community," said Diana S. Wynne, Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs at Cracker Barrel. "Cracker Barrel is pleased to provide the resources to support these schools, and we look forward to adding more programs in the coming months."

The development of this program started with Linda Minor, an elementary school counselor who wanted to influence the children in her hometown of Sylva, North Carolina. Ms. Minor bought two double rockers from Cracker Barrel and organized volunteer reading times in her school. The volunteers and students sat in the rocking chairs, rocking and reading. In addition to the benefit of reading, Minor envisioned her efforts as a way to influence world peace by introducing children to new ideas and new cultures.

Within a few months, Ms. Minor had dozens of volunteers reading with kids, and the program became a tremendous source of hometown pride. After visiting the school, Cracker Barrel worked with Ms. Minor and other literacy experts to develop a program that could be placed in multiple schools. At no cost to schools, the Rockin' Reader program provides Cracker Barrel rocking chairs and books to schools for teachers to use to develop volunteer reading programs. Rockin' Reader creates a comfortable reading place in each school, a place where children and adults can enjoy reading together.

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"The Rockin' Reader program and its volunteers inspire and motivate students to read," said James Herman, Director of Reading First – Tennessee. "Research shows that students who read with adults on a regular basis will become lifelong readers and lifelong learners. In addition to providing quality books to schools in need, this program creates a warm environment for adults to read with children. Rockin' Reader really does build caring and literacy in the community."

Cracker Barrel is now accepting applications for new partner schools. The Rockin' Reader website ([www.rockinreader.org](http://www.rockinreader.org)) features the online application, a complete list of partner schools, plus news and video profiles from those schools.

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**About Cracker Barrel**

Cracker Barrel Old Country Store® restaurants provide a friendly home-away-from-home in their old country stores and restaurants. Guests are cared for like family while relaxing and enjoying real home-style food and shopping that's surprisingly unique, genuinely fun and reminiscent of America's country heritage...all at a fair price. The restaurant serves up delicious, home-style country food such as meatloaf and homemade chicken n' dumplings as well as its signature biscuits using an old family recipe. The authentic old country retail store is fun to shop and offers unique gifts and self-indulgences.

Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, Inc. (Nasdaq: CBRL) was established in 1969 in Lebanon, Tenn. and operates 587 company-owned locations in 41 states. Every Cracker Barrel unit is open seven days a week with hours Sunday through Thursday, 6 a.m. – 10 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, 6 a.m. - 11 p.m. For more information, visit: [crackerbarrel.com](http://crackerbarrel.com).

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