



## **CRACKER BARREL SHARES ROCKIN' READER® PROGRAM WITH SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

*Literacy program generated 16,400 volunteer hours in first year*

**LEBANON, TENN** (September 25, 2009) – Cracker Barrel Old Country Store® (“Cracker Barrel”) has successfully expanded its literacy program that’s connecting volunteers with children in elementary schools throughout the nation. The Rockin’ Reader® program is now operating in 225 elementary schools in 29 states. Now in its second year, Rockin’ Reader builds caring and literacy in the community by encouraging volunteers to read with children while sitting in rocking chairs donated by Cracker Barrel.

Cracker Barrel decided to expand the program following the many success stories that came from the charter Rockin’ Reader partner schools. At the end of the 2008-09 school year, Rockin’ Reader partner schools reported that volunteers had contributed 16,400 hours of reading time with children. Twenty-eight partner schools had volunteers who contributed more than 200 hours of reading time at their respective schools.

“Rockin’ Reader encourages adults to help children discover the joys of reading,” said Diana S. Wynne, Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs at Cracker Barrel. “The rocking chairs and books donated by Cracker Barrel create a comfortable reading place in each of our schools. Volunteers reading times have already started, and we’re on our way to this year’s goal of 25,000 hours of reading time with children.”

Developed by Cracker Barrel, the Rockin’ Reader program traces its roots back to Fairview Elementary School in Sylva, North Carolina. School counselor Linda Minor purchased two rocking chairs from Cracker Barrel and encouraged her friends to be volunteer readers at her school. Within a few months, dozens of volunteers were reading with children, and the program became a tremendous source of hometown pride. Ms. Minor shared the idea with Cracker Barrel and that led to the company developing a volunteer reading program that’s being shared with elementary schools across the country.

Even though Ms. Minor “retired” last year, she still reads with children at Fairview Elementary and serves on the Rockin’ Reader Advisory Board. “It’s incredible to see Rockin’ Reader being so successful in our partner schools,” said Minor. “16,400 volunteer hours is quite an accomplishment for a new program that had only been in those schools for a few months.”

By contributing 16,400 hours in the 2008-09 school year, volunteers easily surpassed the goal of 15,000 hours of reading time with children. This year’s goal is 25,000 hours. Volunteer reading times are underway now that the donated rocking chairs and books have arrived.

A complete list of partner schools is posted online at [rockinreader.org](http://rockinreader.org). The website also features videos and photographs from partner schools.

**Editor’s Note:** *Partner schools will accommodate media requests for photographs and comments. Media requests can be directed to the school or the media contact listed on this release.*

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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’ dumplins 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 591 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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