



## **Pizza Hut® Announces Commitment to Literacy and Reading through *Pizza Hut: The Literacy Project***

### **Wisconsin Hospitality Group, 72 Wisconsin Pizza Huts team up with First Book to provide literacy tools to Wisconsin Kids**

*Project mission is to transform lives by enabling access to educational resources, empowering teachers and inspiring readers in local communities*

Waukesha, WI – Wisconsin Hospitality Group (WHG), its 72 Wisconsin Pizza Huts, along with its charitable foundation, WHG Cares, are proud to announce a giving initiative, *The Literacy Project*, aimed at improving literacy skills in children within our local communities from February 26 through April 15, 2018. Pizza Hut will raise money for First Book, a nonprofit organization that provides new books and educational resources to children in need, thereby enabling local schools and educational institutions access to literacy resources, empowering area teachers, an inspiring children to read.

From February 26<sup>th</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>, guests who visit any WHG-owned Pizza Hut, or place an order online will be able donate money to The Literacy Project, which will go to local organizations eligible for First Book benefits. WHG is proud to partner with five local Head Start organizations for the 2018 campaign, MCCDA Head Start – Wausau, Jefferson County Head Start, COA Youth & Family Centers, Green Street, and Community Early Learning Center, CELC.

More information about The Literacy Project can be found at [TheLiteracyProject.PizzaHut.com](http://TheLiteracyProject.PizzaHut.com).

“The MCCDA would like to thank Wisconsin Hospitality Group for including us in their 2018 campaign,” Nicole Guthrie, Director of Education Services/Associate Head Start Director says, “There are just so many wonderful items that First Books has that could really benefit our families, children and staff. Like our mission states, we are here to make a positive difference in the lives of the children and families we serve!”

“Pizza Hut has laid out a very ambitious goal with The Literacy Project, and Wisconsin Hospitality Group is excited to help make this project a success,” Mark Dillon, CEO of Wisconsin Hospitality Group says, “we are truly committed to improving the lives of children in Wisconsin, and The Literacy Project is a great way for us to advance that mission.”

“Only a small donation goes a long way,” according to WHG Marketing Director, Denise Harris. “We are hoping to exceed our goal this year and really make an impact.”

- \$1 helps take an important step toward literacy
- \$3 gives a brand new book
- \$5 provides new school supplies
- \$10 purchases a backpack of books

All funds raised in by WHG for The Literacy Project will provide the 2018 beneficiaries with credits to the First Book Marketplace. These credits will provide the needed purchasing power that allows educators to select from thousands of specially curated book titles and other educational resources available for free or deeply reduced rates.

Pizza Hut has a long history of supporting literacy. The Pizza Hut BOOK IT! Program, which was established by the pizza restaurant chain in 1984, has been inspiring young people to read for more than 30 years. Roughly one in five Americans have participated in BOOK IT!, including more than 14 million students this year in 620,000 classrooms nationwide. The BOOK IT! Program is the longest-running, corporate-supported literacy program in the country, and The Literacy Program is building on that foundation.

First Book is an award-winning, nonprofit social enterprise that provides new books, learning materials and essentials to children in need. First Book has distributed more than 150 million books and educational resources to programs and schools serving children from low-income families throughout the United States and Canada. First Book's membership of more than 275,000 teachers and program leaders is the largest and fastest growing network of educators exclusively serving children from low-income families. By making new, high-quality books and essentials available to them on an ongoing basis, First Book is transforming lives, so that every child can have equal access to a quality education. Eligible educators, librarians, program leaders, and others serving children in need can sign up at [firstbook.org/register](http://firstbook.org/register). For more information, please visit [firstbook.org](http://firstbook.org) or follow the latest news on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Wisconsin Hospitality Group, a local Wisconsin based restaurant franchise group, and its two restaurant brands, Pizza Hut and Applebee's, through the generosity of its guests and the hard work and charitable efforts of its team members, have raised more than \$3 million for local charities in the past 18 years. To learn more about our other fundraising campaigns, go to [whgcares.org](http://whgcares.org)

The company has established a non-profit foundation, WHG Cares, to centralize all of the company's fundraising efforts and to provide opportunities for tax deductible donations. During all of WHG's campaigns, the company stays committed to keeping costs down and to providing 100% of the campaign net proceeds to its charitable partners.

Wisconsin Hospitality Group and its affiliates own and operate over 100 restaurants across Wisconsin. WHG has grown in sales to become the largest Wisconsin-based food service franchise company in the state. Headquartered in Waukesha, WHG operates 33 Applebee's Grill & Bar restaurants and 72 Pizza Hut Restaurants, all committed to guest satisfaction and community support.

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