



Contact:  
**Leslie Hale**  
Executive Director  
(706) 410-1912  
Leslie.Hale@booksforkeeps.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **BOOKS FOR KEEPS RETURNS TO 8 ATHENS SCHOOLS STARTING APRIL 28**

ATHENS, GA. – April 23, 2014 – No child should go a summer without great books to read.

It is this mantra that brings Books for Keeps back to elementary schools all over Athens each spring – bearing 12 books for every child in grades Kindergarten through 5. Books for Keeps distributions begin April 28 and Alps Road Elementary School and conclude May 14 at Howard B. Stroud Elementary School.

Members of the media are invited to join Books for Keeps to capture the magic. The organization is also still seeking volunteers to fill some distribution shifts – volunteers can sign up via [booksforkeeps.org](http://booksforkeeps.org) or [handsonnortheastgeorgia.org](http://handsonnortheastgeorgia.org).

Over the course of two-and-a-half weeks, Books for Keeps will give away 45,000 books to 3,700 students in Athens, plus one school in Atlanta and one school in rural Warrenton. Out of the 10 schools to be served during that time, five are new to Books for Keeps.

“Books have the power to transform our lives, reveal new ways of seeing the world, and, in the simplest sense, to keep our neurons firing and our brains active,” said Leslie Hale, executive director of Books for Keeps. “However, far too many children lack access to books during summertime for a range of reasons, and it is hurting their educational outcomes. Our goal is to change that, one school at a time.”

Books for Keeps was founded with a simple mission: to provide children with guaranteed access to books in order to stop summertime learning loss, also known as “summer slide.” This loss of educational attainment is particularly prevalent among children from low-income families, who are less likely than their peers to have access to books outside of school.

This year’s distributions will be the first at three schools in Clarke County: Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary, Winterville Elementary, and Downtown Academy.

“For some of these children, the books they pick out on this day may be the first books they’ve ever owned,” said Hale. “Every child should have the opportunity to feel the

- more -

[WWW.BOOKSFORKEEPS.ORG](http://WWW.BOOKSFORKEEPS.ORG)

pride of ownership and to feel excitement about reading – whether reading about sharks or a favorite basketball player, about princesses or ordinary children just like themselves.”

Between April 28 and May 14, the organization will distribute books at Alps Road Elementary, Fowler Drive Elementary, J.J. Harris Elementary, Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary, Gaines Elementary, Downtown Academy, Winterville Elementary, and Stroud Elementary schools in Athens. Additionally, Books for Keeps will take books to students at Dunbar Elementary School in Atlanta and Freeman Elementary School in Warrenton.

The organization’s program expansion both inside and out of Athens is part of a commitment made in 2011 to the Clinton Global Initiative. At the time, Books for Keeps committed to serve every Athens school where 90 percent or more students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and to reach one school in urban Atlanta and one school in rural Georgia.

To learn more about this commitment or about Books for Keeps in general, visit [www.booksforkeeps.org](http://www.booksforkeeps.org).

For more information, including a schedule of distribution dates and times, contact [leslie.hale@booksforkeeps.org](mailto:leslie.hale@booksforkeeps.org) or (828) 713-2132.

\*\*\*

***About Books for Keeps:*** Books for Keeps started as one woman’s effort to help a child who loved to read but had no books at home. It grew from a grassroots movement into a research-based program to end summer slide in Athens, Ga., by ensuring children have access to books when school lets out. The nonprofit was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization in 2011.

Books for Keeps distributes books to students ranging from pre-K through 12th grade. The flagship elementary school program, *Stop Summer Slide!*, is based on a University of Florida study that found giving economically-disadvantaged elementary school children each 12 high-interest books at the beginning of summer had an impact on reading achievement statistically similar to attending summer school.

Books for Keeps distributed 40,000 books to Athens-Clarke children in the 2012-13 school year, including 24,000 through *Stop Summer Slide!* In May 2014, it has plans to distribute 45,000 books through *Stop Summer Slide!* at 10 elementary schools in Athens, Atlanta, and Warrenton.

###