



Ford, Houston Ford Dealers Launch \$100,000 in Scholarships and Donate 10,000 New Books to Accelerate Education

- Ford Motor Company Fund and the Houston Area Ford Dealers partner with First Book to donate 10,000 new books to nearly 100 schools and programs serving low income communities
- Shearn Elementary School 2nd and 3rd graders participated in reading activities with Houston Texans football offensive guard Xavier Su'a-Filo and Ford representatives
- Unique collaboration part of Ford Driving Dreams initiative includes \$100,000 in scholarships for Greater Houston high school seniors

HOUSTON, Dec. 8, 2015 – Ford Motor Company Fund, in collaboration with Houston Area Ford Dealers, today launched the Ford Driving Dreams education initiative with a donation of 10,000 new books and \$100,000 in scholarships available to high school seniors in Greater Houston. The announcement took place at the NRG Stadium during a reading party with 60 second and third graders from Shearn Elementary School, Ford dealers, representatives and Houston Texans player Xavier Su'a-Filo. Ford Fund is the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company.

“The Houston Area Ford Dealers are part of the fabric of the Greater Houston community and we couldn’t think of a better way to demonstrate our commitment than to invest in our young people,” said Ron Ewer, chair of Houston Ford Dealers Advertising Fund (FDAF). “Through our innovative collaboration with Ford Fund, we can make great strides when it comes to advancing the educational achievement of Greater Houston students from elementary to high school.”

The scholarships, which will be administered by LNEESC, are available to graduating high school seniors in Houston and San Antonio, Texas. The scholarship application is available at www.forddrivingdreams.com and the deadline is Feb. 29, 2016.

At the reading party Houston Texans football offensive guard Xavier Su'a-filo, Ford employees, dealers and First Book representatives participated in activities with second and third graders and donated a new book to each of them. Students were able to choose between *Zapato Power #2: Freddie Ramos Springs into Action*, *Niño Wrestles the World (First Book Marketplace Special Edition)* and *Magic Tree House #29: Christmas in Camelot*. First Book is a nonprofit social enterprise that provides new books and educational resources to kids from low-income families.

Joe Avila, manager of community relations of Ford Motor Company Fund, said, “Our goal is to be an active participant in the educational success of our future leaders. What better way to do this than to promote literacy among our children by giving them access to new books. At the same time, high school seniors will have the opportunity to apply for college scholarships. These partnerships with LNEESC and First Book are both an important component of our education efforts throughout the year.”

This initiative is part of Ford's overall education efforts in that state of Texas and focuses on promoting reading at an early age. According to the American Educational Research Association, the ability to read by the third grade determines a child's future. Yet, research shows that in some of the lowest-income communities, there is only one book per 300 children. The 10,000 new books will be distributed by the end of the school year to children attending nearly 100 schools and programs that serve low-income communities in Greater Houston.

"Having access to books is one of the biggest predictors of a child's academic success," said Kyle Zimmer, president and CEO of First Book. "And together with Ford we're helping level the playing field for kids who too often go without these and other critical educational resources. We're proud to join Ford and its Houston dealers to provide new books to kids in Houston and look forward to our continued work to improve lives in the communities across the country."

For more information, visit www.forddrivingdreams.com

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About Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services

Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services works with community and global partners to advance driving safety, education and community life. Ford Motor Company Fund has operated for more than 65 years with ongoing funding from Ford Motor Company. Ford Driving Skills for Life is free, interactive, hands-on safety training focused on skill development and driving techniques, while addressing inexperience, distractions and impaired driving. Innovation in education is encouraged through Ford Blue Oval Scholars, Ford Next Generation Learning and other inspiring programs that enhance high school learning and provide college scholarships and university grants. The Ford Volunteer Corps enlists more than 30,000 Ford employees and retirees each year to work on local projects that strengthen their communities and improve people's lives in more than 40 countries around the world. For more information, visit <http://community.ford.com>.

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