**NEWS RELEASE** For Immediate Release: Month xx, 2017

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**(Library Name) to Provide Books to Underserved Children**

**through My First Books Program**

**CITY, Idaho** -- Through the Idaho Commission for Libraries’ My First Books program, the XXX Library will provide books to young children, up to age 6, to help build their home libraries. Goals of the program include increasing children’s access to books and educating their parents or caregivers about the importance of early literacy.

The Xxx Library is partnering with Xxxxxx to reach parents/caregivers of children who could benefit from the My First Books program. Each child who is enrolled will receive one age-appropriate book per month for nine months. The books are for the youngsters to keep and will provide the foundation of their home library. The titles are carefully chosen for each age group, based on their high quality and appeal.

The program has three age groups: babies and toddlers, from birth to age 2, who receive board books; children aged 3 to 5, who have not yet entered kindergarten; and youngsters, aged 5 and 6, who are attending a kindergarten program.

Through the My First Books program, the participating children develop or increase their early literacy skills. In addition, the parents/caregivers improve their knowledge of the importance of early literacy and are motivated to support their child’s learning and reading with a home library and regular use of their public library.

Xxxxx Library Director FirstName LastName said, “We are so excited to participate in the My First Books program, with XXXX (partner(s)), and create a positive relationship between the Xxxx Library and children in our community who may have challenges accessing the public library. We will show the youngsters and their parents all that the library can do to bring the joy of reading and learning to the child and help prepare them to enter school ready to read.”

In Idaho, 37 public libraries will participate in the 2017-2018 My First Books program, which runs September, 2017 through May, 2018. Approximately 4,100 children will be provided with quality, age-appropriate books. Their parents will also be invited to a workshop or library event that focuses on early learning. The My First Books program is sponsored by the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL), with some funding from the Institute for Museum and Library Services.

The ICfL’s Youth Services Consultant Staci Shaw said, “Studies have shown that access to books is critical to a child’s ability to learn to read -- which is the foundation of their entire education.” Shaw continued, “The ICfL’s My First Books program gets high-quality, age-appropriate books into the hands of children across the Gem State who, otherwise, might not have them.”

For more information, visit: <http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/my-first-books>.

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