



The New Haven Reads Community Book Bank, Inc.
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TESTIMONY OF OSCAR L. SUAREZ,
BOARD MEMBER AND PARENT,
NEW HAVEN READS
BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
February 26, 2021

Good evening, Committee Chairs and distinguished members.

My name is Oscar Suarez and I am pleased to be able to speak to you tonight as both a member of the board of New Haven Reads and as a proud parent of a New Haven Reads student.

To begin, I would like to thank you for the generous support New Haven Reads has received in the form of \$50,000.00 from the Judicial Branch for the last two years. As a member of the board I can attest to the fact that this money has supported hundreds of children in New Haven Read's endeavor to promote childhood literacy. During these difficult times, New Haven Read's dedication to our most vulnerable community is more imperative than ever. Our schools and teachers are overwhelmed with the added difficulties that hybrid models and remote learning brings, which has exposed a disproportionate amount of children of color to an ever-widening achievement gap. But fortunately, many of these children have New Haven Reads to provide them with the one-on-one support that they need to overcome these difficulties. And as a parent of a New Haven Reads student, I can personally speak to that.

There is nothing harder as a parent than to see your child's spirit start to dim because of their lack of confidence at school. I will never forget the day when my now eight year old son Jack asked me why he could not read as well as the other students in his class, even though he was working just as hard as they were. At that moment, I felt helpless. Jack was already receiving additional support at school, but it simply was not enough. That is when the dedicated tutors of New

Haven Reads stepped in. Jack's tutor, Ms. Robin, through individual intervention, has helped Jack find the confidence he needed to rekindle his light. With her support, Jack feels that not only can he be a reader, but that he can be successful at school. And now, while I'm putting my daughter to bed, I can hear Jack reading to himself in the other room. I hear Jack telling his friends about a book he read. Jack even asks for books as Christmas and birthday gifts.

New Haven Reads has given Jack, and all of the children it serves, a sense of self-confidence that will allow them to pursue their dream.

I recognize that there are many great organizations in Connecticut that need the State's financial support. However, I would implore you to consider the fundamental impact that reading has on your daily life and the lasting consequences for the children and communities of the Greater New Haven area if they were not provided the services of New Haven Reads. So please consider New Haven Reads in the next budget for further support from the Judicial Branch.

Thank you for your time and consideration.