



Books for Brazil Fairy-Godmother

Livros para o Brasil – Fada Madrinha

VOLUNTEER Q&A

Q: How did Books for Brazil (BFB) start?

A: Joelma Nascimento, Books for Brazil founder and a native from São Paulo, Brazil, came to Boston in 1998 to learn English. While in Boston, she learned about American culture and how important was for a child to have access to books. She was also amazed by the children's resources at local libraries, which allowed underprivileged children to have access to great books.

From her own personal experience, Joelma knows that children of low-income families in Brazil are not used to reading books as part of a fun activity. In fact, books are not a part of their daily lives. To change that, Books for Brazil was founded in June 2005 as a non-profit organization with a mission to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged children in Brazil. By providing books free of charge to children of low-income families, Books for Brazil gives these kids an opportunity to discover the magical world of reading.

Q: Why does Joelma have a Florida mailing address?

A: Joelma, President of Books for Brazil, is now starting a Books for Brazil branch in Florida and is recruiting passionate volunteers to raise awareness of our organization's missions. Books for Brazil main office is still located in Massachusetts, run by the board of directors, officers and volunteers to continue its mission.

Q: Why did the organization decide to donate books instead of food?

A: The U.S. Department of Education released a report* in 2005 about the importance of reading in childhood. The study stated that being able to read and understand what is written enables children to become more confident, self-sufficient, and better students. Kofi Annan, the Nobel Peace Prize 2001 recipient, once said, "Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family." We would like to offer that opportunity to these children in Brazil so they are encouraged to learn how to read and continue reading as they are growing up.

Q: Who does Books for Brazil help?

A: Books for Brazil help children, ages 0-18, of low-income families or low-income communities throughout Brazil. The organization has 4 programs to reach these children in different ways.

Q: Do kids have motivation to read if their parents don't know how to read?

A: We introduce books as toys (non-school books, board books, picture books, touch and feel, etc...) at an early age (0-12). The books we provide may contribute and stimulate the children's desire to read. We believe a book can make difference in the future of a child. Some of the parents who didn't have the opportunity to go to school know how important education is. They want to do their best to give to their children what they couldn't have. If some parents are less involved, our volunteers try to educate them during a book distribution on how important reading is to a child. We also provide these parents with information on how to participate in their children's reading activities. Learn more at **Reading Tips** in the Info Center section.

Q: Who reads to the kids?

A: We believe that having a book available is a big first step towards inspiring them to become life-long readers. Some children books do not require reading. For example, books in English or in Spanish with brightly colored illustrations or touch-feel books are to encourage learning through play so the book becomes a familiar object. Most book requests are through a local educator or librarian who will have staff and/or volunteers to read to the children.

Q: How do institutions and communities find Books for Brazil?

A: Beneficiary locations in Brazil find us mostly through our website as well as through other educational, governmental, affiliate business and friends' websites. Usually local educators and librarians are the individuals contacting us to request books for their communities.

Q: How many distributions does Books for Brazil make in a year?

A: Distributions depend on how much money or books we collect during the year. In order to receive a greater discount on book pricing, we need to combine about 5-10 book requests and buy them together. We send on average 50 books per institution to about 10 institutions per year. We have delivered 2,300 books so far. You can also check our book delivery map online in the Books in Action section for latest delivery information.

Q: How does Books for Brazil purchase books and distribute them?

A: In order to keep expenses to a minimum, books are ordered in Brazil in bulk from a distributor such as Compra Universitaria. The books are then shipped to the local coordinator for delivery. We also have a wish list on Amazon.com where you can select book(s) from and the book(s) is(are) shipped to our U.S. address. We collect the books along with donated ones and ship to Brazil.

Q: Why do Brazilian children not have access to books?

A: The minimum wage in Brazil in 2008 is approximately US\$240 a month (R\$415/month). Because book consumption in Brazil is still very low, book prices are usually very high and a low- income family cannot afford to buy non-school children's books.

Q: How do you raise funds to run the organization?

A: Books for Brazil accepts monetary donations online or mail in any amount. We also have fundraising events such as our annual Watertown Yard Sale, fundraising dinners, Benefit Dinner and our Christmas gift basket. Books for Brazil also receives corporate matches or donations as well as anonymous donations from other events such as Watertown Faire on the Square and Brazilian Independence Day Festival. We have online and print sponsors and if you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact us for more information.

Q: How are the funds spent?

A: The organization is run solely by volunteer work so funds are geared mainly towards purchase and distribution of books. You can download our annual report for more detailed information on our organization's spending.

Q: Can I donate new and/or used books?

A: Yes, we are most interested in books written in Brazilian-Portuguese language for ages 0 to 12. We also accept gently used children picture books and hardcover books written in English, Spanish or Portuguese for children ages 0-6. We prefer hardcover picture books for best durability, with brightly colored pictures and interesting short stories. Books can be sent to:

USA:

Leonardo Chen
Books for Brazil – Fairy Godmother
133 Fells Ave
Medford, MA 02155

Joelma Nascimento
Books for Brazil – Fairy Godmother
10318 NW 30 Terrace
Doral, FL 33172

Carla Nunes
Books for Brazil – Fairy Godmother
1555 W Middlefield Rd
Mountain View, CA 94043

Brazil:

Joelma Nascimento
Livros para o Brasil – Fada Madrinha
Rua Americo Torneiro, 194
Jd. Kennedy, Maua, SP
Brasil 09340-000

Q: Can I donate a math, science, or history book?

A: We prefer people to donate children books so Brazilian kids are more likely to be interested in. We believe if the books catch their imagination and become a fun activity, they are encouraged to continue reading.

Q: What can I do if I know of a community that needs books?

A: If you know of a community that needs books in Brazil, you can fill out a Donation Request Form (available online) and email it to us. You can also help coordinate the book distribution at a community by becoming a BFB volunteer. Please feel free to contact us at any time for more information.

Q: How do you choose the location of the institutions and communities?

A: Our intension isn't to prioritize any state or city. When an institution submits the donation request form, the institution goes through an interview process with our Programs and Services committee. Once approved, the institution gets queued for book delivery. We rely substantially on local volunteers to reach out to all parts of the country.

Q: Who qualifies to receive book donations?

A: Institutions and social services agencies that provide services to low-income families, libraries, schools, hospitals, and volunteers interested in organizing a book delivery for a particular community.

Q: What are the steps or requirements to receive a donation?

A: Fill out our Donation Request Form (available online). The beneficiary institution or individual need to meet the following requirements:

- The institution or individual must not charge the children or families for the delivery of the books
- The institution or individual must benefit underprivileged children or low-income families
- The institution or individual must maintain close communication with BFB to coordinate and document the donation process.

Q: How can I help?

A: There are many ways to help. You can become a BFB volunteer, help us on a task-by-task basis or help us in an upcoming event.

Q: Do you have volunteers in Brazil?

A: Yes, most of the volunteers live in proximity to or have close ties to the children we help. They usually are educators or volunteer coordinators who receive the books and read them to the children. We are also looking for volunteers in Brazil to help with the operational aspects of a nonprofit organization. Please fill our volunteer application form and email it to us.

Q: Is Books for Brazil recognized as a non-profit organization in Brazil?

A: Books for Brazil is still not recognized as a nonprofit organization in Brazil (we are recognized in the U.S.) but eventually we would like to become one. We need volunteers to apply for non-profit status in Brazil and also run a Books for Brazil branch in Brazil. If you or someone you know is interested in joining our organization, please contact us.

Q: What kind of events do you participate in?

A: We hold fundraising events throughout the year such as dinners at Brazilian restaurants, beneficiary dinner party, and yard sales. We also participate in festivals such as Brazilian Independence Day Festival, Watertown Faire on the Square (in September) and MIT Latin conference (in April) to raise awareness. For upcoming events, please check our website or sign up for our mailing list. We welcome suggestions and information on other activities we could participate in to help achieve our mission. Please contact us.

For more information, please contact info@booksforbrazil.org or visit our website www.booksforbrazil.org/GetInvolved.html