



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Monday, June 1, 2026 (Toronto, Ontario)**

## ChIRP Partners with the Build-a-Bear Foundation, the CIBC Foundation, and the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation for a Beary Fun Summer of Reading

Book Clubs for Inmates is honoured to announce a beary exciting ChIRP (Children of Inmates Reading Program) summer reading initiative, made possible by the generous partnership of the Build-A-Bear Foundation, the CIBC Foundation, and the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation.

Once a month, ChIRP volunteers across Canada enter local penitentiaries and offer incarcerated parents the opportunity to select a book for their child and read that book aloud into a recording device. Our dedicated volunteers then mail a copy of the book and recording to the child at home, providing emotional connection and inspiring a love of reading.

This June, over 350 ChIRP children will receive a beary special mailing consisting of:

- An adorable teddy bear, donated by the Build-A-Bear Foundation;
- A copy of *The Very Cranky Bear* by Nick Bland and a bookmark, donated by The Indigo Love of Reading Foundation;
- A recording of their parent reading *The Very Cranky Bear*.

Book Clubs for Inmates is incredibly grateful to the CIBC Foundation for funding this mailing, and the Build-A-Bear Foundation and the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation for providing ChIRP with bears, books, and bookmarks. This also marks the fourth consecutive year the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation has partnered with ChIRP; such long-term institutional partnership is rare in the charitable sector. Indigo's continued investment:

- Provides hundreds of new children's books to ChIRP children;

- Recognizes and demonstrates the national importance of ChIRP's impact;
- Helps ensure every participating parent can record stories that reach their children with dignity and love.

This partnership is also timed to kick-off a summer of fun and enjoyable reading, counteracting the potential effects of summer slide (the regression of academic proficiency in children due to the summer school break). Nothing encourages summer reading more than sweet and silly read aloud books featuring very cranky bears!

“The Indigo Love of Reading Foundation believes in the power of books to connect families and inspire young readers. We’re proud to support ChIRP in bringing stories - and parents’ voices - into the lives of children across Canada, helping foster both emotional connection and a lifelong love of reading.”

–Ian McCann, Senior Manager for the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation.

**The Indigo Love of Reading Foundation** is committed to addressing educational inequality, and more specifically the literacy crisis in Canada. Since 2004, the Foundation has been dedicated to putting books in the hands of children in high-needs communities across Canada. With the support of Indigo and its customers, they have committed over \$36 million to over 3,600 schools, impacting more than 1 million children. The Foundation is dedicated to raising awareness about the critical importance of children's literacy while providing essential literary support to high-needs children across Canada.

Now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the mission of ChIRP is to build healthier parent/child relationships by developing children's literacy and listening skills, increasing their vocabulary and attention spans, and promoting a love of learning through the consistent presence of a parent and books. Studies show that children of incarcerated parents face more social and economic challenges as a result of their guardian's absence, through no fault of their own. For children, who are often the unseen and unintended victims of incarceration, receiving a book and hearing the voice of someone they love affirms belonging, comfort, and continuity during separation, which in turn supports the child's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Learn more at [www.bookclubsforinmates.com/chirp](http://www.bookclubsforinmates.com/chirp).

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