

## **By Jim Davidson**

**Nationally Syndicated Columnist**

**There is a reason why four of every ten students in American schools today drop-out and do not graduate. For years we have blamed America's teachers for a dismal performance. While teachers share some responsibility, the main reason is because of the breakdown of the home. This is especially true for children who come from very low-income homes where few, if any, books are present. These children do not acquire reading, vocabulary and language skills before they enter school. As a result, they are so far behind they fail to catch up, even in the early grades, before they are caught up in a world of sports, video games, television, I-pod, cell phones and text messaging.**

**As a result, all of us pay a high price because of the large number of students who never finish high school, and can later be found on welfare rolls, in drug rehab programs, prisons and leading a very unproductive life. In many of our major cities, streets are like a war zone, with murder and other serious crimes being committed by a high number of drop-outs who lack literacy and communication skills. If we could have given them books and taught them how to read, and a love of reading in their formative years, many of these losers could have become winners.**

**On June 9, 2005 a group of my fellow citizens met to develop a very unique literacy project that came to be known as a "Bookcase for Every Child(C)." With all volunteers, using no tax money or grants of any kind, we made a commitment to build 50 bookcases each year and give them, along with a 'starter set' of gently-used books to children enrolled in our local Head Start programs. By federal guidelines, these children must all come from low-income homes. We also have volunteers read to these children each week at the centers. However, our focus is on parents reading to their pre-school children in the home, and we have had great success.**

**At this point, we have built 250 bookcases and on October 16, 2008 we held the first "Bookcase Literacy Banquet" where our whole community came together for a good meal, fantastic entertainment and a complimentary copy of my book "Learning, Earning & Giving Back." We only charged \$15.95 per person and raised more than enough funds to build the next 50 bookcases and had sufficient funds to give another community in our county \$500 to start their own project.**

**There are a number of citizens here in \_\_\_name of city/town\_\_\_ who are interested in starting a "Bookcase for Every Child" project. If you are interested in being a part of our local project, contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_e-mail\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ phone no.\_\_\_\_\_. For more information, visit the Conway Bookcase Project website at [www.bookcaseforeverychild.com](http://www.bookcaseforeverychild.com)**