

## Reading Birthday Parties

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*William Cullen Bryant Elementary School  
Cleveland, Ohio*

Parents and teachers wanted to increase students' independent reading in a way that would also involve parents. The Cleveland Teachers Union suggested the idea of grade-wide birthday parties at which children receive books as gifts. The librarian and family liaison planned the birthday parties for grades Pre-K, one, and two.

Parents volunteered to wrap the books for each student. Each grade, made up of approximately 75 children, went to the school library for their birthday party. The children were excited to find the library decorated with balloons and the tables covered with festive plates and napkins. Parents distributed cupcakes, punch, and magnets to the children. Every child eagerly opened their present—their very own book—courtesy of Cleveland Teachers Union.

Over 230 students received refreshments and a book to add to their personal library at home. Overall, the practice cost \$230 to implement. The Cleveland Teachers Union purchased the books and reimbursed the school for the refreshments and other party supplies. Parents' donation of their time and energy to wrap the books and organize the parties added immensely to the children's enjoyment. Parents and staff were pleased with how the practice turned out, and hope to recruit even more teacher and parent volunteers.

*Laura Gump, Family Liaison  
(216) 351-6343*