

# Texas Teen Takes Literacy Advocacy to New Heights with Bookworm Global

DALLAS, TX, UNITED STATES, June 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/

-- High school junior Shivi Shrivastava was shocked when she first entered an inner-city school library in Dallas. Rows of almost empty bookshelves and a dearth of fundamental learning materials made her wonder: How can kids be expected to succeed if they lack even the tools to learn? That encounter ignited a years-long quest to close the reading gap in underprivileged areas. Shivi is not only changing things today; she is heading an initiative.

Shivi, Vice President of Bookworm Global, an international nonprofit committed to fostering reading, has been instrumental in extending its influence and developing creative projects to involve young readers. Her path into literacy advocacy, however, began with a basic want to assist rather than with a title or leadership position.

Shivi combed the web in her first year for means to help. A turning moment came when she came across an interview with Alana, the creator of Bookworm Global, on The Kelly Clarkson Show. Motivated by Alana's goal, Shivi quickly contacted wanting to participate. She started the first Texas chapter of Bookworm Global at her school not long after.

Shivi began little since she was set on making a difference. Organizing yearly book drives, she gathered more than 1,000 children's books for Thomas Elementary School, a nearby underprivileged local school. What began as a small initiative rapidly took off, and before long her team of volunteers grew from 20 to 40 students—each dedicated to increasing reading availability for young children.

But Shivi was aware that just giving books fell short. Students required dynamic and interesting experiences to really spark a love for reading. Keeping that in mind, she started a number of practical literacy projects meant to make reading enjoyable and reachable. Encouraging kids to investigate many genres and cultivate a lifetime passion of books, her team set up a school book



Image of Shivi

club and designed book recommendation posters for nearby libraries.

Bookworm Global named Shivi Vice President in acknowledgement of her leadership and commitment; for her, however, the job was far from done. She imagined a more personal, deeper approach to literacy advocacy—one that went beyond book gifts. She led a one-on-one mentoring program in Dallas where volunteers worked directly with 4th graders leading them through literacy and critical thinking exercises. Her objective? To establish a setting where students interacted with books, questioned them, and developed confidence in their own learning capacity rather than only reading them.

Shivi is now concentrating on increasing these projects to reach even more pupils without access to appropriate educational resources as she looks forward. Every child, in her opinion, should have the opportunity to fall in love with learning, therefore she is committed to making that happen—one book, one student, and one project at a time.

Jonathan Kenigson

Kenigson.com

+1 615-389-7049

[email us here](#)

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