Mrs. Laura Bush Delivers Keynote Address at National Town Hall Meeting on School Libraries: Thousands Join Government Officials, Educators and Corporations to Address Vital Role of School Libraries in Rebuilding the Gulf Coast American Association of School Librarians and Scholastic Host School Libraries Work!: Rebuilding for Learning

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NEW ORLEANS, June 26 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Nearly one year after catastrophic hurricanes in the Gulf Coast destroyed schools and devastated neighborhoods, many school libraries are without vital resources, including books and periodicals, technology and, in many cases, basic infrastructure. In communities that have successfully rebuilt schools or welcomed displaced students and their families, school libraries are proving to be a critical resource in reestablishing both the educational and social fabric of these areas.

Today, Mrs. Laura Bush joins local and national government officials, educators, business leaders, and thousands of concerned librarians from across the country for a national town hall meeting to focus on the recovery of school libraries throughout Gulf Coast communities. Mrs. Bush, a former school librarian, has been actively involved in restoring Gulf Coast school libraries, through the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries Gulf
Coast School Library Recovery Initiative.

The event, School Libraries Work!: Rebuilding for Learning, hosted by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and Scholastic, the global children's publishing, education, and media company, will address the critical role school libraries play as the hub of learning in our schools and communities. Just as the rebuilding of schools is essential to the revitalization of communities, the recovery of school libraries is essential to providing vital resources and technology for students, teachers, and families now and in the years to come. The town hall will be moderated by Lester Holt, NBC News Weekend TODAY Anchor.

School Libraries Work!: Rebuilding for Learning will examine research and theory around how school libraries are optimally used as educational centers within the school community -- particularly in areas affected by natural disaster and crisis. Town hall participants include: Dr. Norman Francis, President, Xavier University and Chair, Louisiana Recovery Authority; Keith Curry Lance, Ph.D., Director, Library Research Service at the Colorado State Library; J. Linda Williams, President, AASL; Wayne V. Rodolfich, Superintendent, Pascagoula Mississippi Schools; and local grant recipients from the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries as well as an audience of over 4,000 librarians from around the country. Participants
will discuss how successful school libraries cultivate 21st Century learning skills and explore ways in which libraries serve as agents of school recovery.

"For many children, especially low-income children, the loss of the school library has meant the loss of their primary access for books and exposure to -- and practice with -- electronic information resources," Williams says. "This forum will provide education stakeholders with the opportunity to hear stories from librarians and administrators from the Gulf Coast who successfully reopened their libraries and are serving their communities."

The total loss across the hundreds of school libraries in the Gulf Coast that were either damaged or destroyed is almost impossible to calculate. With millions of books, printed materials, technology resources and archival materials destroyed, rebuilding libraries and schools across the Gulf Coast is a daunting task -- one which will be impossible without the support of corporate, foundation, and private entities.

As part of School Libraries Work!, Dick Robinson, President, Chairman and CEO of Scholastic, and David Perdue, CEO of Dollar General will issue a call to action to corporations and foundations nationwide, encouraging them to take steps toward committing funding and resources to rebuilding and revitalizing school libraries throughout the region. To underscore the
importance of private support, Donna J. Gambrell, Regional Director of the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Gulf Coast Rebuilding, will speak to the potential impact corporations and foundations can have across the region.

"There is an urgent need and real opportunity to reexamine the current state of school libraries and the role they play in fostering reading and learning, as districts look not just to rebuild but to reform schools," said Dick Robinson, Scholastic. "We are confident that this forum will convey how effective libraries facilitate literacy and learning, and inspire corporations and private citizens to join in the effort to make libraries the center of our children's learning. Together, we will explore the true potential for libraries to be vital educational and community hubs for schools and their surrounding communities during the recovery period and beyond."

School Libraries Work!: Rebuilding for Learning will take place on Monday, June 26, 2006 at the American Library Association's Annual Conference -- the first major conference to return to the New Orleans Morial Convention Center since Hurricane Katrina. The hall will open at 11:00am and close to further entry at 12:30. The event will conclude at 2:30pm.

About American Association of School Librarians
The American Association of School Librarians, http://www.aasl.org, a division of the American Library Association (ALA), promotes the improvement and extension of library media services in elementary and secondary schools as a means of strengthening the total education program. Its mission is to advocate excellence, facilitate change and develop leaders in the school library media field.

About Scholastic

Scholastic Corporation (Nasdaq: SCHL) is the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's books and a leader in educational technology. Scholastic creates quality educational and entertaining materials and products for use in school and at home, including children's books, magazines, technology-based products, teacher materials, television programming, film, videos and toys. The Company distributes its products and services through a variety of channels, including proprietary school-based book clubs, school-based book fairs, and school-based and direct-to-home continuity programs; retail stores, schools, libraries and television networks; and the Company's Internet site, http://www.scholastic.com.