

Light up
Literacy



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Light Up Literacy?

Light Up Literacy is a resource-rich program created to help bring to life the value of *tikkun olam* in congregations and schools during Hanukkah, to show our children how meaningful it can be to not only receive but to give.

As God rested on the seventh day of creation, we are asking families to help give illiteracy a rest on the seventh night of Hanukkah. In lieu of giving gifts on that night, we are asking parents to give a monetary gift to

Reading Village to provide books for children in Guatemala.

And on that night families will share a special blessing over the candles, take part in a guided discussion about the importance of reading in our lives, and celebrate the joy of reading by sharing a story.

Who is Reading Village?

Founded in 2007, Reading Village is a legally-registered, 501c3, US-based, non-profit organization. All donations to Reading Village are tax-deductible. www.readingvillage.org

Our mission is to transform the lives of impoverished Guatemalan children through literacy. We work in partnership with rural, indigenous Maya communities to develop local leaders whose hard work and creativity develops a love, ability and habit of reading among the children in their own community.

We offer leadership development training and scholarships to Maya teenagers so they can afford to stay in school. (Public school in Guatemala is not free.) In return, these teens give back to their own community by volunteering their time to lead dynamic reading activities with young children.

Why Literacy?

Every child should be able to grow up free to express their fullest self, give what they have to contribute to their families, their communities, their countries and the world. The ability to read is fundamental to good health, economic self-sufficiency, a political voice and understanding of the greater world. And it gives children the power to dream.

Why Guatemala?

Apart from Haiti, Guatemala has the lowest level of literacy in the Western Hemisphere. In the rural areas where Reading Village works, the literacy rate is approximately 50%.

Why Hanukkah?

Candles are a central and important ceremonial element in Maya religious tradition. A lit white candle signifies the light of life. For children in the Reading Village program, literacy is the light of life. It brings them out of the oppression of illiteracy and poverty. So on the seventh night of Hanukkah, we too light candles in celebration of freedom from oppression, and through *tzedakah* we are helping to transform the lives of Guatemalan children by giving them the gift of literacy.