



AN AMAZING KID

MARIA KELLER

BY LAURA PAGE

Maria Keller's mom, Maura, nominated her daughter as this issue's Amazing Kid. She said that the recognition would provide appropriate acknowledgement of Maria's amazing efforts. After reading what Maria has accomplished, I have to agree.

Ten-year-old Maria is an avid reader. When she was eight she asked her mom why other children didn't seem to read as much as she does. Maura told her daughter that she was especially fortunate because she had access to more books than many children. "In fact," she told her. "Some children have no books at all."

Maura said that she will never forget how

who have no books in their home tend to score poorly on standardized tests and to get bad marks in school. She feels that it is the right of all children to have access to books. She intends to instill in as many children as possible the profound love of reading that she experiences every day, and is eager to get books into the hands of as many children as possible, so that they can experience the wonderful things that books hold within the confines of their pages.

Maura said that long ago they lost track of how many book collection drives Maria conducted, but before the end of 2010 she had collected and distributed more than 400,000 books. She has indirectly

encourage her and to keep her on-task; she does the work on her own. What really motivates Maria to continue her activities are the smiles that lighten the faces of children who receive books from her. Such moments fill her with a joyfulness that energizes her for the work that she's doing.

Maura said that her daughter's activities with her foundation have brought her into first-hand contact with the reality of children who lack the resources that middle class kids take for granted. Maria has watched children embrace books that have been given to them with the same enthusiasm they would give to a candy bar or some other treat. They are delighted with

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dumbfounded Maria was to learn that many kids don't own even one book; it took only a little while for her to make up her mind that she was going to do something about that problem, so she started her own nonprofit foundation, that she calls READ INDEED, and set for herself the ambitious task of collecting a million books and distributing them to kids who lacked reading material. In her own words, Maria has decided that she wants "to make the world a better place, one book at a time."

Maria became especially energized and concerned when she learned how children

improved the literacy rate of children of all ages. Not only is she putting books into the hands of hundreds of thousands of children, but she has become an inspiration to many people. Her activities have served to motivate children and even some adults to recognize the important role that reading plays in the potential for educational success that children will have now and for their professional success later in life.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable things about Maria's story is that she has done most of this on her own accord. She doesn't require a network of people to

the first books that some of them have owned personally.

Through her efforts, Maria has touched the lives of thousands of children and expects to continue to do so for many years to come. We are impressed with this young woman, and are glad to honor Maria as March's Amazing Kid. **110***

Do you know an "Amazing Kid" between the ages of five and 18 years old that is worthy of this award? To Nominate an "Amazing Kid" go to www.110mag.com and click on The Amazing Kid Nomination link.