



Speech for the 20th IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award Ceremony

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Asahi Shimbun (Japan)

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

May I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you who have gathered here today for the presentation of the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Awards. I am especially delighted to be able to join you today to pay tribute to the recipients at the awards ceremony, which also marks the 20th anniversary of the IBBY Awards.

First of all, I wish to congratulate the winners of the 2010 Awards—the *Osu Children's Library Fund*, Ghana and the *Fundación Taller de Letras Jordi Sierra i Fabra*, Medellin, Colombia. I congratulate every one of you who have taken part in the activities for your outstanding efforts and achievements. I would also like to thank the panel of prestigious judges and those associated with IBBY for their dedication and commitment in making the final selections for the award.

The *Osu Children's Library Fund* (OCLF) is an organization that was established in Canada in 1991, and since, has been promoting reading and literacy in Ghana. The organization has built, and runs community libraries in Ghana's capital Accra and its outskirts. Furthermore, OCLF has also helped start many library facilities in local schools. Thanks to their dedicated efforts, many people in Ghana have acquired reading and writing skills, and are able to experience the joy of reading.

The other recipient is *Fundación Taller de Letras Jordi Sierra i Fabra*. Their projects collaborate with the city of Medellin in Colombia. The goal is to encourage reading and literacy. The project holds various events and workshops that bring books to vulnerable people who lack the means for reading as a result of economic hardships and political strife. All of their activities play a major role in nurturing sensitivity and dignity in youths through the promotion of reading, giving them the vital tool to build their futures.

The IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award was initiated under the sponsorship of The Asahi Shimbun newspaper company, inspired by the IBBY World Congress that was held in Japan in 1986. The Asahi Shimbun strongly supports IBBY activities. The award is given to groups and research institutions around the world for their work in



distributing books and reading promotion activities among children and young people. Including this year's two winners, The Asahi Shimbun has presented the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award to 23 programs around the world so far. We take great pride in the fact that we have been able to pay tribute to the worthy cause, continuously, for over 20 years.

If I may add a few words about The Asahi Shimbun, we are a Japanese newspaper company that was founded in 1879. The morning edition has a current circulation of about 8 million. We are considered one of the most trusted organs of public speech in Japan, and we constantly strive to deliver accurate and responsible news reporting. In addition to news coverage, The Asahi Shimbun devotes much energy to contributing and supporting culture and the society at large. Establishment of awards, including the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award being presented today, is part of such efforts.

Lastly, I would like to express our heartfelt admiration and congratulate IBBY and its supporters for their dedication in promoting books and bringing the joy of reading to children throughout the world. It is our sincere hope that IBBY will continue with its good work, and we look forward to seeing the activities bear ample fruits in the years to come. The Asahi Shimbun is committed to provide our support to the best of our ability towards promoting books and reading among children and young people.

Thank you.

