

# Ali lends name to children's books

BERRIEN SPRINGS, Mich. (AP) - Muhammad Ali used to recite poems before his fights that brashly predicted victory against his ring opponents, but boxing's poet laureate had to overcome dyslexia as a child to learn how to read and write.

A new classroom collection of children's books bearing Ali's name is intended to help motivate and empower young students, particularly boys, to overcome a different kind of obstacle to becoming accomplished readers: disinterest.

Scholastic Corp.'s "Muhammad Ali Presents 'Go the Distance'" features books that champion Ali's values and are aimed at: socially disadvantaged students in grades three through eight who believe neither reading nor education is relevant to their lives, said Lonnie Ali, the boxing legend's wife.

"The foundation of all education is reading," she said. "Books can take a child outside of his immediate vicinity, his immediate environment, to someplace else. It makes them learn about other communities outside of their immediate neighborhoods. That's one of the things this particular library has been designed to do: to take children on that next journey out."

The collection includes a wide range of multicultural fiction and nonfiction books that generally reflect the interests of young boys in underserved classrooms because, on average, they read far less than their female counterparts.

"A lot of it has to do with subject material — getting the interest of the child, to make them read," Ali said. "The more you make a child read, the more they are motivated. The more motivation they have, the more they seek out books to read and the more they become empowered by what they read and empowered with what they can do."

Some of the titles in the collection include: "Stealing Home: The Story of Jackie Robinson," about the legendary athlete who broke baseball's color barrier; "Hunterman and the Crocodile," a West Africa folk tale; "White Star: A Dog on the Titanic," about a young boy and a dog who bond while aboard the doomed ocean liner; and "Touching Spirit

Bear," a story of a young boy's journey from self-destructive anger to forgiveness.

The collection wouldn't be complete without an Ali book, so Scholastic also included "The Champ: The Story of Muhammad Ali."

Many boys would rather spend time playing video games than reading books, said Ali, who does most of the public speaking on behalf of her 64-year-old husband these days because of his Parkinson's disease.

"You don't see boys carrying around a book, reading it, anymore, like you used to," she said. "You barely see girls do it."

The "Going the Distance" books convey such ideals held by her husband as building confidence, showing determination, finding mentors and offering and earning respect.

The project was about two years in the making and was launched Nov. 10.

"I know for a fact that if boys are given materials that they are interested in reading, they will read it. That's why this came about," Ali said while relaxing in the business office on the couple's sprawling 88-acre estate in Berrien Springs, about 170 miles west of Detroit.

"Not every child comes to school on the same playing field. Some of them have reading challenges, some of them have handicaps of some sort, but it's important they know you can still achieve greatness, no matter what."

The collection includes three libraries for grades 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8, each with 96 books for students to read and discuss in class. There also are additional materials for teachers, such as printable lesson plans, book notes and a classroom poster of Muhammad Ali.

Akimi Gibson, vice president and publisher of books at New York-based Scholastic, said the collection offers a mix of mostly contemporary titles from the publisher for "students who feel very disenfranchised from the educational process. In this particular program, we assembled books that speak to the realities students face every day."

"Going the Distance" also introduces a new generation to the former boxer, which delights him immensely, his

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# Woods to build Dubai course

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) - Tiger Woods said Sunday he will develop his first golf course in Dubai, an oil-rich city that hosts two European Tour events and has seen a recent rise in golf course construction.

The Tiger Woods Dubai will feature a 7,700-yard, par-72 course, a 60,000-square-foot clubhouse, a golf academy, 320 exclusive villas and a boutique hotel with 80 suites.

"I look at this project not only as an opportunity, but also as a great responsibility," Woods said.

Dubai already has eight golf courses, including the Emirates Golf Club, which hosts the Dubai Desert Classic. Woods won the tournament earlier this year in a playoff over Ernie Els. Woods lost in Dubai five years ago when he made double bogey on the final hole to finish two shots behind Thomas Bjorn.

Els, Bjorn, Colin Montgomerie and Ian Baker-Finch are among those who have built or are building golf courses in Dubai. Woods said he hopes to not only match up to those

courses, "but, hopefully, create a memorable, everlasting legacy."

Tiger Woods Dubai is a joint venture between Woods, who last month created Tiger Woods design, and Tatweer, a member of the government-affiliated Dubai Holding.

"I have been amazed by the progress of Dubai. From the time I first came to play here in 2000, I wanted to be a part of this amazing vision," Woods said.

He said he chose Dubai for his first golf course because he was excited about the "challenge of transforming a desert terrain into a world-class golf course."

The development is scheduled to be finished in late 2009 at Dubailand, the region's largest tourism and leisure project.

Saeed al-Muntafiq, the CEO of Tatweer, said he is confident that Woods' Dubai golf course will be a success.

"We never looked for anyone beyond Tiger for the project because we believe in only working with the very best," al-Muntafiq said.

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