

Money for literacy will go a long way at local school: Alexander Muir/Gladstone Avenue PS gets Indigo love

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It's always a good day when the principal of an underfunded inter-city school gets a \$122,000 cheque in the mail.

June 2 was a good day at Alexander Muir/Gladstone Avenue Public School, when a grand grant from Indigo arrived.

The Indigo Love of Reading Foundation focuses on high needs schools who demonstrate a necessity for literacy resources to meet the needs of all students by encouraging a love of reading in every child and giving them the chance to reach their full potential.

Nearly 70 per cent of the 400 students at Alexander Muir/Gladstone Avenue Public School have English as their second language. That presents a certain set of challenges according to Principal Karen Sitarek.

The school library is short of multiple copies of current books at all levels to address the school's diverse population. The school desperately needs to weed out and replace outdated material with titles that are relevant to the students.

"We need to have books that are for students at all levels and in their native language, because reading in any language is good," Sitarek said.

The prospect of any sort of grant to help meet the school's needs was enough motivation for a small group of teachers to submit a written proposal accompanied by a DVD and a scrapbook of children's reflections on books explaining why there is a need for more resources at their school.

"I had a group of teachers that worked extremely hard on this," she said.

Twenty elementary schools from across Canada received grants of up to \$160,000 over a three year period from the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation.

"They said our proposal was outstanding," said Sitarek. She said the money will be spent over the next three years on books and literacy related software and games from Indigo Books.