



More books for Fenelon Township Public School students

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By Catherine Whitnall



Fenelon Township Public School students have made a bit of a dent in their recent windfall from the **Indigo For Love of Reading Foundation**.

While the classroom adjacent to the school's library was a temporary home for hundreds of books, costing roughly \$5,700, they still have another \$65,000 to go before they make their way through the \$72,000 received earlier this spring. The funds are meant to help the school support literacy initiatives over the next three years.

"Our first priority was to get books into the kids' hands right now, boosting the libraries they have in their classrooms," said principal Shelley Woon, explaining 46 students were selected from each grade for the recent shopping spree at Chapters.

To make the most of things, each student was asked to select books they would like to see in their classroom, next year. Grade 8 students selected books for junior kindergarten students.

Although they will not benefit from the grant, the graduating students - like Brett Sweetland - were honoured to be involved, nonetheless.

"I feel happy that my sister (Briana) will be able to read all the books I picked out," he noted.

For Grade 1 student Camryn Hardaker-Schubauer, it wasn't so much about finding something to read herself.



"I was looking for books on horses because (classmate) Jordan likes them," said the youngster.

Caleb Reynolds felt the same way.

"The more books we have to read, the better," said the Grade 4 student. "It gives us lots more choice."

Staff will go over what else is needed for the coming school year and hit the store again prior to the first day of school in September. With many of the books found at the school's library ranging in age from 20 to 30 years old, updates are definitely in demand.

Ms Woon said being selected as one of four Ontario schools chosen this year to receive support was overwhelming.

"It's twice my budget to do everything I need to at the school," said Ms Woon, citing this includes books for the library and classrooms, as well as things like sports equipment, classroom and office supplies and even tissues. "It's just amazing that we have all that, and more, and it's just for books!"

Ms Woon learned about the Indigo grant program, now in its fourth year, during a visit to Chapters. Those wishing to access the program had to submit a proposal. She knew hers would have to really catch their attention with only 245 students attending the rural school near Cameron. A board game containing all the elements needed for the proposal - statistics showing need, proof of commitment and initiative, leadership within the school and future plans for literacy resources - did more than fit the bill.

"I wanted them to see the reality of how school budgets are spent. We just can't spend it all on books," said Ms Woon, who has spent 40 per cent of her budget, in the past two years, on literacy materials.

Ms Woon was especially pleased that the game was returned to the school.

Normally, proposals remain with the foundation. The game is also featured on the Chapters website to help promote the For Love of Reading program (www.loveofreading.org).