

## **New chapter at Woodland Thousands of new books fill school library**

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Cheers and screams filled the gymnasium at Woodland Primary as the entire student body of kindergartens to Grade 3s erupted into applause.

The students weren't having a Halloween party or meeting SpongeBob SquarePants. Instead, Principal Darlene Sullivan had just announced that each student in the school would soon select one brand new book to add to their personal library.

This gift is only a small part of the \$122,000 worth of books that Woodland Primary is receiving from Chapters Indigo. The school will be given approximately \$44,000 worth of in-store or online credit each year for three years to buy books for the library and classrooms. In addition, \$15,000 over three years will go to fund literacy projects.

"We're absolutely ecstatic, and we're really proud of the fact that the proposal we submitted came to light for us. Just to hear the words that we got a \$122,000 grant all in books is just phenomenal," said Ms. Sullivan, who was admiring the new books in the school library after the cheering students had returned to their classrooms for a read-a-loud sessions with their teachers.

This significant investment in school literacy came about thanks to an application sent by school librarian Tara Humber, teacher Jennifer Woodford and Principal Sullivan to the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation. The application detailed the literacy programs the school planned to implement should they win the contest. Woodland is one of ten schools across the country – and the only one in Newfoundland and Labrador – to be awarded this gift.

"We're very passionate about literacy at this school. To be able to put a book in the hand of every student promotes literacy in the community and in the homes, especially for those students who don't have access to



Dylan Lockyer, left, and Joseph Toope of Grade 3 show off their love of reading at Woodland Primary on Friday. The school held an assembly to celebrate winning \$122,000 worth of books donated by Chapters Indigo.

books," said Ms. Sullivan.

To everyone's great excitement, the first shipment of 21 cases of new books arrived at the school last week. Prior to this year, Woodland's library had been full of old, out-of-date books that were in rough shape. Now, said Ms. Sullivan, the library looks just like a bookstore, with gleaming copies of the latest in children's literature mixed in with reissued classics like *Caps for Sale* and *Harold and the Purple Crayon*.

"It's just been a gift from heaven for this school," she said.

Woodland has planned several literacy programs to revitalize reading in the community, focusing on improving boys' literacy levels – which are traditionally lower than girls' – and putting French books on audio tape so parents of French immersion students can read to their children at night. Special needs students who struggle with literacy will get help thanks to the grant money, and there will even be a program promoting journalism which will see teachers take their classes to sites in the community, with the children taking pictures and writing articles about the experience.

"There aren't a lot of government funds that go into our school libraries any more, so it's nice to see that a large corporation like Chapters Indigo has stepped up and is willing to support our school libraries," said Ms. Sullivan.

"Literacy rates are not where they should be in Canada and even more so in Newfoundland, so this grant will help boost that."

Students will undoubtedly benefit from the thousands of new books in the school library, and they are sure to take part in the literacy programs over the next few years. But what will make this gift real for them will be picking out their very own book.

This will be a happy week at Woodland Primary, said Ms. Sullivan.

“There will be lots of activity, with the kids coming in and choosing their books. I can’t wait to see that life in the library.”