

THE LINDSAY POST

Fenelon Township P.S. receives \$72,000 for new books



CAMERON - Fenelon Township Public School is one of 20 Canadian schools to receive money for new books from the Indigo For Love of Reading program.

Principal Shelley Woon said she was notified Wednesday that the school will receive \$72,000 to support literacy over the next three years.

"I only get \$36,000 a year for all resources for my school, from furniture to books," Woon said. "To think I have that much to spend just on literacy materials!"

Since 2004, 30 schools from across Canada have been selected as Indigo Love of Reading Foundation schools. This year the foundation will deliver \$1.5 million in book dollars. FTFS is one of four Ontario school on the list.

Woon found out about the Indigo For Love of Reading grant, now it its fourth year, on a visit to Chapters. She knew her proposal would have to be outstanding to qualify the small school of 245 students for funds.

And it was.

Woon fashioned a board game that contained all the elements needed for the proposal – statistics showing the need, proof of commitment and initiative, leadership within the school, and a plan to rejuvenate literacy resources in the school.

"It's just how my mind works," Woon laughed. "I knew I wanted it to look like a book, and it all unfolded from there."

Woon said the first thing on her wish list is to restock classroom libraries. Next she'll move on to the main library, where most of the books are 25 to 28 years old. A survey of the shelves showed the lowest average age was 15 years, she said.

"We have more than 9,000 books, but kids are attracted to visual appearance of a book. If it's old material, kids aren't going to pick it up," Woon said.

For the two years she has been principal at FTPS, Woon has spent 40 per cent of her school budget on literacy materials.

The money will flow before the end of the school year, and will be spread out over three years, Woon said.

As for the phone call she received from the organization's CEO Heather Reisman to say the school had won, Woon laughs.

"I said 'Great,' but I didn't hear the amount, so I asked her to repeat it. Then I think I just kept saying, 'Great, fantastic, wow,'" she said.

Woon's board game is pictured on the Chapter's website to help highlight the For Love of Reading program.