

New Books at Hopatcong High School Ignite Reading Frenzy

One common lament is heard about teenagers these days. Few are interested in reading books. That seems far from the truth at Hopatcong High School. Many students eagerly combed through six boxes of new books looking for a good read in September when the library received its first shipment of the school year. A \$3,000 literacy grant from the Dollar General Foundation paid for the purchases.

"We are interested in utilizing grant funding for educational literacy purposes and are grateful for any assistance we can get in these tough economic times," explained Superintendent Dr. Charles Maranzano. "The generosity of Dollar General means that children will have extended opportunities to improve their literacy skills."

The grant is designed to improve youth literacy and reading comprehension, but its scope will reach much deeper. "Without Dollar General's generous support, we would not have been able to afford new books this year," commented information resource teacher Patricia Paugh, who sought the grant.

The grant is designed to improve youth literacy and reading comprehension. "Hopatcong is excited to receive this additional funding source to help with our efforts to increase literacy skills for our children," Maranzano said.

The money from Dollar General paid for more than 300 new titles, which are mostly fiction. One major thrust of the grant was to purchase graphic novels, a popular genre among young adults.

"When I started here three years ago, the library didn't even have one full shelf of graphic novels. Now we have two bookcases full. I am very proud of that," Paugh said. In addition, the grant also allowed the school to begin developing a collection of audio books on CD. Students chose some of the titles, while others were picked to enhance classroom instruction. Students said they could not imagine a school year without new, popular titles.

"I can tell it's going to be a good school year because of all the new books we have," remarked senior Tania Morales. She already has finished 15 books from the new collection and routinely asks for more.

Senior Elliot Petty got more than he bargained for. He is speeding his way through three new series, even convincing Paugh to let him take out six books at one time. Petty deposited the volumes in the library book drop along with a note. "These books have been returned unharmed," Petty wrote.

For additional information, contact:
Mr. Emil Binotto, Hopatcong High School Principal
ebinotto@hopatcongschools.org
973-398-8803