
For immediate release

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Important recycling project puts books in the hands of early readers

COMOX VALLEY, B.C. – Have you often wondered what to do with all those previously read books that now take space on the shelf and are no longer of value for your family? Consider donating them to a good cause.

Recycling children’s books can improve access to more reading opportunities for young children and kick-start a lifetime love of reading stories and books.

Research shows that reading to a young child can help build their creativity, develop intelligence and establish relationships through the bond that develops while engaged in reading.

This is the philosophy that drives a dedicated group of volunteers, many retired teachers, to gather at Courtenay Elementary three times each month to operate a local book recycling project.

The *Comox Valley 1000x5 Book Recycling Project* needs help filling its shelves this time of year to keep a steady supply of books to donate to children throughout the Valley.

Kate Hackett, program coordinator, explains that the goal of the project is to expose young readers to stories from 1,000 different books, if not more, by the time a child enters kindergarten at the age of five.

“When a child is exposed to a lot of literature before they go to school, they hit the deck running when they start in a school setting,” said Hackett. “They understand how stories work, how they begin and end. They understand setting, they understand good and bad characters and they understand the plot. And, when you know how stories work you can predict, which are all higher-level thinking skills.”

Hackett and her fellow volunteers run a well-orchestrated system for book recycling beginning at the District elementary schools. Books are collected in bins placed at schools throughout the Valley. Volunteers take the books regularly and bring them to Courtenay Elementary for cleaning and categorizing by age group, including a holiday themed collection that is saved for distribution in November.

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While the project has had five years of success, it can only thrive and survive through wide community participation and by raising greater awareness of the importance of early literacy. By helping 1000x5, the community together can ensure that the gift of literacy in the Comox Valley continues now and for years to come.

“Another really important thing is that this program is from the community back to the community,” added Hackett. “[Books] come from children who no longer want or need them and go to children who do want and need them. It’s like a direct transfusion.”

The 1000x5 Children’s Book Recycling Project, made possible in partnership with Comox Valley Schools, Rotary Club of Courtenay and the Comox Valley Lifelong Learning Centre, is asking the community to help continue providing free books for preschool aged children in the Valley so that children 0 to 5 can have the chance to read and receive the gift of a great story. Donated books are delivered to the Immigration Welcome Centre, StrongStart, Jump Start, Family Services, Teddies ‘N Toddlers, and to the Denman Island childcare centre.

One possible way to help is to donate books at your neighbourhood elementary school where families can drop off gently used or new books that no longer hold value in their home, including Airport, Arden, Aspen Park, Brooklyn, Cumberland Community, Courtenay, Queneesh, Miracle Beach, Puntledge Park, Royston, and Valley View. Another way to donate is through cash donations managed through the school district, which can be mailed or drop off at 607 Cumberland Road, Courtenay.

Family Literacy Day takes place 27 January to raise awareness about the importance of reading and engaging in other literacy-related activities as a family. Since 1999, thousands of schools, libraries, literacy organizations and other community groups have taken part in the initiative.

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For more information about Family Literacy Day visit <https://abclifeliteracy.ca/family-literacy/>

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Image (Source: Comox Valley Schools)

100x5 volunteers meet three times per month to prepare donated books for distribution into the community.