

Family Literacy Day: Jan. 27

1000x5 a winning formula for literacy



- ▲ **A driver from the Sidney Lions club collects books to be distributed through the Sidney Food Bank.**
- ▲▲ **1000 x 5 project leader Daphne Macnaughton cleans and sorts books while a CHEK News photographer works in the background. The 1000 x 5 project was the subject of the first Vital People TV report sponsored by The Victoria Foundation. The new series airs each Sunday on CHEK News @ 5**
- ▶ **One child's letter captures the enthusiastic response of the young recipients of books from the 1000 x 5 project.**



Retired school principal Daphne Macnaughton is an advocate of reading but it was simple arithmetic that inspired a literacy project for young children and families on the Saanich Peninsula.

“One night after too much coffee, I started doing calculations and I realized that if every young child had only 300 books read to them each year, that the number would amount to 1,500 books by the end of age five.”

From this notion came the idea for 1000 x 5 Children’s Book Recycling Project, which aims to ensure every child in the Saanich Peninsula has at least 1,000 books read to them by the time they are five years old and entering kindergarten. It’s based on the ideal of reading to young children daily, with the figure rounded down to account for the realities of family life.

“Over many years in public education, I observed that some children came to school ready to learn after having been read to regularly, while some children started school without ever having had even one book read to them,” said Macnaughton, who is now the 1000 x 5 project leader.

The 1000 x 5 project aims to address the balance of that inequity. The project started at Saanichton Elementary, where Macnaughton was principal. It is now sponsored by Peninsula Connections for Early Childhood (PCEC), the Peninsula Early Years community network. Every week, volunteers meet at the Saanichton Individual Learning Centre to sort, label and bag

books that are then delivered to family-serving agencies in the Saanich Peninsula and to the Peninsula Co-op, which built a special shelf to support the project.

While Macnaughton and the PCEC 1000 x 5 volunteers have little direct contact with the recipients of the gift bags of books, they do hear how excited children are to receive them.

“A food bank manager said if they have run out of books, clients have asked ‘What? No books?’” Macnaughton said. “And a family counsellor who goes into homes says the first thing the children do is reach for the bag of books that they know are gifts for them.”

Books for 1000 x 5 come from a variety of sources. Every school in Saanich District 63 accepts donations and some hold special book collection drives. Books are also accepted at the Peninsula Co-op Food Centre. Funds to buy new books and supplementary used books are con-

tributed by individuals and service clubs, while The Victoria Foundation recently gave a \$14,000 grant for project expenses and coordination.

Victoria Foundation CEO Sandra Richardson says 1000 x 5 touches on three vital indicator areas tracked in the foundation’s annual Vital Signs community report card: learning, belonging, and getting started.

“This project helps children develop a solid foundation for successful learning and it also promotes a healthy start for young children and a strong sense of belonging in their community – and in their families,” said Richardson. “Imagine the feeling a young child has when they realize people in their community care enough to give them a package of books that’s wrapped up like a gift!”

Retired district principal Eileen Eby has started the Victoria 1000 x 5 Book Recycling Project in School District 61 and Macnaughton hopes oth-

ers will follow suit in their communities because she believes that reading regularly to young children not only contributes to their early success in school, but is critical to emotional well-being as well.

“It facilitates bonds between children and the adults in their home,” she said. “When an adult and a child are reading together, it’s as if a bubble comes over them – together, they are entranced. The 20-minute break from their worries and the stresses of everyday life is a gift to the parent as well as the child.”

For more information on the PCEC 1000 x 5 Children’s Book Recycling Project, see www.peninsulaconnectionsforkids.ca/book-recycling.php or email Daphne Macnaughton at d1mvictoria@shaw.ca For information on Victoria 1000 x 5, email Eileen Eby at eileeneby@shaw.ca. To learn more, find us at www.VictoriaFoundation.ca

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We are The Victoria Foundation. They are the people who nurture the unique and essential spirit that flourishes when people believe their community holds possibilities for everyone. We call them *Vital People* and we’re sponsoring a series that tells their stories. *Vital People* Sundays on CHEK News @ 5.

