

FINAL REPORT – DISTRICT GRANT P-670
COMMON CORE LITERACY
ESCONDIDO EAST ROTARY CLUB

Escondido East Rotary Club was pleased that the district approved our request and authorized matching funds for our Common Core Literacy Grant. The following milestones have been achieved with this grant:

- EER leadership met with principals from Felicita and Juniper Schools to review how the funds would be used and the expectations of our Club for ensuring that the books would get to the students and that to the extent possible, there would be parental involvement for the K and preK groups.
- The funds totaling \$6,000 were delivered to the School District in mid-September for the use specified in the grant. \$3000 was to go to each school and ½ would be directed to early reading for K and preK with the other ½ directed for non-fiction library books consistent with common core requirements
- On October 23, 2014, 11 of our Club Rotarians met at the District offices to place labels in the 1100 books that had been ordered and purchased with the grant funds. These labels noted the donation by Rotary. The invoices will be uploaded to the documents section so that the funds are adequately accounted for.
- Books for K and preK were given to the teachers and were packaged into reading boxes decorated by students and parents so that the students could take the books home as well as use them in school.
- On January 9, 2015, the Principal of Felicita School (Kathy Morris) gave a presentation to our Club including video of the teachers and students using the books in class.
- There was a picture and citation of this grant in the Local Section of the Union Tribune on January 30, 2015.
- Club leadership plans to meet with principals in the spring to discuss needs for next year.

Message from Kathy Morris, Felicita Principal

Make way for books, cheers and smiles. Mrs. Horton moves masterfully from table to table watching carefully and providing feedback and encouragement in her kindergarten class as students work on a writing piece. As the first student finishes up, she announces to the class, “Boys and Girls, after I have checked your writing I will dismiss you to go to rug. Let’s see. Today, I’d like you get your book box and read quietly on the rug as everyone gets finished.” Her students spontaneously react by letting out cheers of. “Yeeess!”, “Yeah!”, “Alright!”. Enthusiasm for books abounds in Kinder classes at Felicita and Juniper School. Each student has their very own book box filled with books from the teacher’s classroom library that has been hand picked by both student and teacher. The books are selected because of both readiness and interest level. Each box represents a special bond between the teacher, students and books. Research shows that early reading experiences, opportunities to build vocabularies, and literacy rich

environments are the most effective ways to support the development of pre-reading and cognitive skills that ensure that children are prepared for success in school, including grade-level reading, and throughout life. Access to books is essential to developing basic reading skills, leads to longer and more frequent shared reading between parents and children, and produces increased enjoyment of books and improved attitude towards reading and academics.

Unfortunately, too often, poverty plays a role in educational opportunities. In our own Felicita and Juniper School communities, 70-85%% of children live in poverty and are in danger of falling behind before they even enter kindergarten. Nearly 7 of 10 economically-disadvantaged young children in our community are not on track in their cognitive development when they start kindergarten. Often, when children enter school behind, they rarely catch up. Research indicates that children who are struggling readers in 1st grade are 88% more likely to be struggling readers in 4th grade. When children struggle to read in 4th grade, they are four times more likely to drop out of high school. That's why there is so much attention on 3rd grade reading scores in our community and across the nation because if children are not on track by the end of third grade, their chances for success decrease substantially. It is far easier to reach children starting from Preschool and Kindergarten with quality early literacy experiences than to try and catch them up later with interventions in the older grade years. The gift of these books has tremendously supported our classroom teachers and school libraries with creating an enthusiasm and motivation to read along side those critical quality early literacy experiences. Our heartfelt Thanks! Kathy Morris Felicita Principal.