

TFRW Dictionary Project Press Share Your Story!

Local third-graders get dictionaries

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by Charles Wood, Hill Country News



Don't know a word? Look it up. Most people don't give dictionaries a second thought. For a third-grader learning to write, however, having a dictionary close at hand can be very important.

Thanks to a group of caring individuals, third-graders at three area elementary schools will find it much easier to spice up their writing assignments. This week, the Williamson County Republican Women (WCRW) donated 264 dictionaries to third-graders at three elementary schools. The books were purchased through the Dictionary Project, a nonprofit organization that provides personal dictionaries for third-grade students. The organization uses 95 cents of every dollar donated for the purchase of more dictionaries.

Each third-grader got a personal dictionary at Knowles and Bagdad elementaries in Leander ISD, and at Berkman Elementary in Round Rock ISD. Every third-grader in the Berkman Elementary bilingual class got a Spanish/English dictionary.

"To have every child have his or her own dictionary is very powerful," said Knowles Librarian Paulette Rodriguez. Students are much more likely to use dictionaries if they have their own, she said.

"This will really help my students with vocabulary and spelling," said Knowles Elementary third-grade teacher Chrysty Leighton. "It shows the community is really supportive of our children's education."

Yaneth Chavez said the dictionaries will be a big help to 12 of her students, who are transitioning to their first year of English-only education. Knowles Bilingual teacher Miravel Delagarza said the dictionaries will help her students to read and write in English, making it easier to look up words they don't know.

"This will help me to improve my spelling and learn more English words and not have to ask the teacher so many things," said Knowles third-grader Gabrielle Puente. "I'll be able to look things up myself."

Sharon Bailey, Literacy Chair for Williamson County Republican Women and also a teaching assistant in Structured Learning at Knowles Elementary, encourages others to get involved in the Dictionary Project. "If each civic organization in Williamson County knew about the Dictionary Project or Literacy Project, our students and teachers in economically disadvantaged areas would have the much-needed resources to promote greater success within the Williamson County classrooms," she said.

For more information about the Dictionary Project, visit www.thedictionaryproject.org.

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