



QuEd up for Education

People and programs impacting our QCSD community

1st graders receive new books as summer prize

By Gary Weckselblatt

All first graders in the Quakertown Community School District went home for summer vacation with a new book to read, compliments of the Quakertown Community Education Foundation.

The \$3,000 project allowed the school district to give out 400 books to encourage the young students to read over the nearly three-month break.

"First grade is such a crucial year for students in the development of their reading skills," said Erin Oleksa-Carter, the district's supervisor of literacy and arts. "We believe this will help them continue to grow as readers, and develop their love of reading."

The concept was proposed about a year ago by QCEF's Robert Leight, a former school director, who described first grade as the "entry into literacy."

QCEF President Bill Tuszynski said the idea began with "providing books to students who couldn't afford them. But it's difficult to identify those

students, and there could be a stigma attached to it. So the board decided to do it for all of them."

The book each child received was determined by their teacher, based on the interest they've shown in a certain topic and their reading ability.

Teachers have taken an active role in the program, Oleksa-Carter said, developing reading celebration days. "It's almost like a ceremony where the books are handed out for the student's hard work," she said. "Teachers made sure the kids got the right books in their hands for the summer."

During Trumbauersville's recent "book awards," Oleksa-Carter noted the smiles on the students' faces as they received their prize.

"It was a great thing to see," she said.

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