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Front Page

Textbooks shipped off for countries in need

BY KRISTIN BOYD
Correspondent

OLD BRIDGE - The school district is helping to educate bookworms halfway around the world, thanks to a suggestion from a longtime Board of Education member.

The district donated thousands of language-arts books last month to the Global Literacy Project, a nonprofit group based in New Jersey. The organization, founded in 1999, collects new or rarely used books and ships them to underprivileged countries in an effort to foster community-based literacy initiatives throughout the world, according to the organization's Web site, www.glpinc.org.

Global Literacy Project has shipped out more than 300,000 volumes of books and journals since 1999. The organization has also established several multimedia learning centers and provided scholarships to students in Kenya.

"By acquiring the skill of literacy, people can empower themselves to better negotiate the practical demands of survival and the abstract world of ideas," the Web site says. "Through literacy, GLP helps individuals gain access to their own rich cultural, literary and historical traditions, as well as those of others."

The Old Bridge School District had been using the Harcourt Brace Language Arts Literacy collection throughout its 12 elementary schools, according to Carrie Shreder, the district's purchasing agent.

However, due to a curriculum change, the books were no longer needed, she said. The books, numbering in the thousands, had been sitting in

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storage since the 2004-05 school year, she said.

Board of Education member Gail Kubicke suggested donating the books to the Global Literacy Project.

"Gail told us there was a need for these countries to have books," Shreder said. "We had a surplus, and we were more than happy to donate them."

In addition to schools, the organization receives donations from churches, corporations and other nonprofit groups.

"GLP attracts serious participation from many people," the Web site says. "Some participants are motivated by the twin advantages of linking potential book donors with potential beneficiaries and simultaneously contributing to environmental preservation under the motto: Books for "brainfills" not landfills."

Keven Canton, the school district's custodial supervisor, coordinated the big book move, which was completed June 24.

"There must have been eight pallets of boxes packed with books," he said, recalling how tired he was after helping to load some of those books onto a moving truck.

"It's nice because storing the books was a big problem," he added. "This [donation] was a nice thing to do."

The books will be the "cornerstone of our upcoming donation to rural schools in South Africa," according to an announcement on the organization's Web site. "We are very grateful to the Old Bridge Board of Education."

A picture of volunteers loading and unloaded the books accompanies the announcement.

"I think it's a wonderful project," Shreder said. "This was just the perfect fit for our district and this program."



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