

Making the world
a better place.

////// The Girl Scout Gold Award



Book Buddies

Helping students with their reading success



“When you can read,
you can learn anything!”

March 2022



ScoutingForBooks.com

Create a lasting change in your community.

Go Gold at gswcf.org/goldaward

My name is Elaine Feaster and I'm an Ambassador Girl Scout (Troop 1247) in the 11th grade at Freedom High School. I'm currently working on my Gold Award, which is the highest award achieved within the Girl Scouts of the USA. Seniors and Ambassadors who earn the Gold Award tackle issues that are significant to them and create lasting change in their communities.

I have chosen Literacy Awareness as my Gold Award take action project because early childhood reading and literacy is close to my heart. When I was in 3rd grade, I was diagnosed with Dyslexia, and although I loved to read, I found it challenging. When researching literacy information for my Silver Award, I learned about the importance of being able to read well at an early age and the implications of being illiterate.

Part of my project is to provide ideas to elementary schools in a "Book Buddy" Reading ideas packet, where students at the school get together and read either as a reading club, as a before or after school activity, or as a part of the ELA class during the day.

So many households have overflowing bookshelves of children's books, but there are many others that don't have a book in their home, so reading at school is important. Many students are below reading level so having reading time at school is a convenient and easy way for them to practice reading.

I have put together some ideas on how to get students involved with reading and to help young students or struggling readers gain confidence with their reading and to help them with their reading success.

Thank you for your time reading my ideas and I hope that they spark interest in encouraging young students to read!

Sincerely,

Elaine
elaine@scoutingforbooks.com



Book Buddies Reading Club

To implement my ideas, your school could start a Reading “Book Buddy” Club. This could be for students at HOST, before and after school, or as a part of Club Day, or during ELA reading time where younger and older classes could get together to support each other with reading. Also, the elementary school could partner with a nearby High School where High School students would be given an opportunity to volunteer and be partnered with elementary students who need extra reading help and tutoring. This is a great option as it would help High School students gain service hours for scholarships and it would help elementary students with their reading success.

Younger Students-Older Students

Young students look up to the older students at the school, so to have the Kindergarteners and 1st graders read with 5th graders would be a special time. Also, the older students would feel a sense of pride by helping younger students with their reading.

Younger Students-ESE Students

Older students who struggle with reading might be self-conscious reading aloud to others. But if an older ESE student was to read to a younger student, that would build their confidence and help them with their reading skills.

Younger Students-High School Students

Younger students would connect with High School students while building their reading skills. The High School students would also be a positive role model for the young students while benefiting from service hours.

For each idea:

- The younger students read to the older students
- The older students read to the younger students
- Write a simple story/book and share with the class
- Visit the school library together to choose books

The main goal of this idea would be for all the students to have fun while practicing reading.

When you can read, you can learn anything!

How Your School Can Get Help From Others in Hillsborough County

Reading is fun, and it's so important, but many children don't have books at home. It's unimaginable for people who live in a house that has bookcases filled with books, but the reality is that 61% of low-income families don't have books at home for their children to read. In middle-income neighborhoods there are 13 books per each child, but in low-income neighborhoods there is 1 age-appropriate book for every 300 children.

A child's ability to read skillfully by the time they are 9 years old impacts their future.

Did you know....

- students who don't read skillfully by 3rd grade are 4 times more likely to drop out of school?
- the inability to read is linked to poor outcomes as a teen and adult, such as dropping out of school, misbehavior and unemployment?
- nearly 85% of the youths who face trial in the court system are functionally illiterate?
- the more types of reading materials there are in the home, the higher the student's reading level?

Your school can reach out and partner with any non-Title 1 school to do a book drive for students at your school. That would bring attention to the need for books and to encourage literacy while helping the community and fellow students. Your school could also ask YMCA's, sports clubs, youth clubs and other community organizations to do a book drive on behalf of your school. In my experience, so many people have numerous children's books that they no longer need, but they don't know what to do with them. Children need the foundation of reading and literacy to become successful adults, and it's essential they have the support and resources to help them, and something simple as giving books to others who need them will have a big and lasting impact.

Read. Share. Repeat. If everyone passed along the books they've read to others, especially to those who don't have books, our communities would be stronger.

***With reading programs at school,
and getting books into the hands of children,
we can all help young students with their
reading success.***

About Me and My Mission

Please view my website and social media:

Website: ScoutingForBooks.com

Facebook: facebook.com/WhereNoBookGoesUnread

IG: instagram.com/ReadShareRepeat

Twitter: twitter.com/ReadShareRepeat

My passion for spreading the importance of being able to read and encouraging literacy is my foundation for my Gold Award take action project. I've created a resource portal website for parents and children, made bookmarks and encouraged elementary schools to start Book Buddy reading clubs. Through my book drive this year, I collected over 4000 elementary level books and 200 Middle School books. In February, I donated 1300 books to the University Area Community Development District to fill their Little Book Houses in their community. In March I donated 225 books to the 75 students at the Sullivan School, and donated 2500 books to Sulpher Springs K-8 School, and 200 books to PCAT.

To keep the books moving through people's hands, I designed a stamp and every book I collected and donated (whether it's the 100 adult level books donated to the Salvation Army or Little Book Houses, or school-aged books donated to students), is stamped to encourage people to "Read. Share. Repeat." and to visit my resource website.

Previously with my Silver Award, of promoting literacy and getting books into the hands of children who didn't have them, I collected books and I focused on improving my community with my motto: "When you can read, you can learn anything!" I believe books need to be in the hands of elementary level students when they are eager to learn. Over this time, I collected over 6000 elementary level books which I donated to Title 1 Elementary schools in Hillsborough County. My desire to improve literacy in my community spread from a small word of mouth project to a massive effort of service to benefit students in need.

With my Gold Award being completed, I am proud to say that I have now gotten over 10,000 books into the hands of children who need them.

To keep my project going, please refer students and parents to my website ScoutingForBooks.com where there are many resources to help people. For adults, I have information on how they can help children with reading and links to different reading programs. For children, I have links to read-aloud books on video and other fun reading and learning websites.

Together we can make the world a better place by creating a lasting change within our community.