



Leading to Reading Annual Report 2019-2020

Program Goals:

- To provide books for children from low and moderate income families
- To increase parent involvement in their child's reading
- To increase AAUW visibility within the community

The project provided reading opportunities for children from low and moderate income families. We collaborated with approximately 20 agencies serving this population across Dutchess County and some parts of Ulster County. The project served those families who have few books at home or limited access to public libraries. Over the life of the project, over 43,000 new books and countless used books have been distributed.

So far this year books and literacy activities have been provided to the Community Family Development Center, Catharine Street Community Center, Grace Smith House, Vassar Brothers Medical Center, Hudson River Lodging, and Book Buddies (Literacy Connections). After the COVID19 pause, books will be distributed to other partner agencies if they are in session or have a way to distribute them to their client families. Collaborations were continued with the Astor Early Childhood Programs, Poughkeepsie Day School, Friends of the Poughkeepsie Public Library District, the Manor at Woodside, and the Poughkeepsie Public Library District. Over 20 Laundromat Libraries were located in laundromats, food banks, emergency care centers, and barbershops.

Community support was provided through a number of sources including AAUW Writers' Tea and Auction, memorial donations in memory of Linda Roy and Sandy Sherman, Barnes and Noble Holiday Book Drive, Friends of the Poughkeepsie Public Library District, the Manor at Woodside, Kohl's Associates in Action, AAUW Cuisine Group, Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers, Morgan Stanley, Central Hudson, Stewart's Shoppes, and Stewart's Holiday Match.

The project had high member participation and attracted new members. 96 members were on the volunteer list to attend work sessions, serve as community readers, or take part in activities. There were 54 members who served on the planning committee to determine yearly events, community partners, and funding opportunities. A number of members coordinated special projects, including the holiday gift wrapping, community readers, and summer programs.

Since books and materials are stored at the Manor at Woodside, used books are provided by the Friends Bookstore and agencies could not allow volunteers to enter during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place, activities were temporarily halted in March. During the pause, additional materials were prepared, books were ordered, and contacts were made when possible with collaborating agencies. The project is again "ready to roll" as soon as possible.

Betty Harrel
Project Coordinator