



Leading to Reading Annual Report 2020-2021

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

Given the COVID-19 restrictions, much of the project was on pause during the 2020-2021 program year. We were not allowed to enter the Manor at Woodside for a number of months, so many of the books and supplies were unavailable. New work and storage locations were sought by members. Donated storage space was obtained from Arnoff Moving and Storage, and the move from the Manor was made in October, 2020. Work and storage space was donated by the Roosevelt Fire Department, and all materials were moved to the Staatsburg Fire House in April, 2021. Help was supplied by member volunteers and the Spackenkill High School Leo Club.

Planning meetings were held throughout the year via Zoom and new outlets were sought. A Holiday Helping Hand grant was received from the United Way of Dutchess-Orange Region. Books were purchased at Barnes and Noble and gift wrapped in individual members' homes for the children at Hudson River Lodging. Barnes and Noble's Holiday Book Drive was designated for Leading to Reading, and cartons of new books were received in March. A grant from Stewart's Holiday Match will fund the purchase of multi-cultural books. Additional funds were donated by the Wappingers Retired Teachers' Association and individual member donations.

So far this year books have been provided to Hudson River Lodging, Holy Light Pentecostal Church, Rural and Migrant Ministry, Sparrow's Nest, Vassar Brothers Medical Center, Astor Early Childhood Centers, and R.E.A.L. Skills. Laundromat Libraries were paused but members began to restock in early spring. A proposal for "Little Libraries" on the grounds of Poughkeepsie City School District schools was submitted and is awaiting school board approval.

The project continues to have high member participation and attracted several new members. Volunteers have expressed a willingness to work in small groups in our new facilities as soon as permitted. Even with the pause this year, almost 45,000 new books and countless used books have been distributed to local children over the course of the project.

Betty Harrel
Project Coordinator