



Leading to Reading Annual Report 2021-2022

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

Even with COVID restrictions, much of the project continued during the current program year. Work sessions took place at the Staatsburg Firehouse with limited-sized groups and adherence to CDC health guidelines. In-person interactions with children and senior citizens still couldn't take place.

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 both in individual members' homes and in a session at the firehouse for the children at Hudson River Lodging. Gifts from HRL were picked up and also wrapped. 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 funded the purchase of multi-cultural books. A Grant from One by One, the foundation of 4Imprint.com, provided 200 string bags to use for the Rural and Migrant Ministry and Poughkeepsie City school children. Additional funds were donated by the Wappingers Retired Teachers' Association, Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, and individual member donations.

This year books have been provided to Hudson River Lodging, Angels of Light, Day One, Holy Light Pentecostal Church, Rural and Migrant Ministry, Vassar Brothers Medical Center, several Poughkeepsie City School District elementary schools, Tabernacle Christian Academy, Astor Early Childhood Centers, and R.E.A.L. Skills. Laundromat Libraries are not as well-used as previously and will need to be re-evaluated. Two Boy Scouts working on their Eagle Scout badges, as well as several community members, built "Little Libraries" which were stocked by the Friends of the Poughkeepsie Public Library District and maintained by Leading to Reading volunteers. They were installed at several Wappingers Central School District elementary schools and 2 Astor Early Childhood Centers. Additional libraries will be installed this spring and summer in Wappingers and the City of Poughkeepsie.

The project continues to have high member participation and attracted several new members. 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