



Leading to Reading Annual Report 2022-2023

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

Although goals remained the same, Leading to Reading continued to grow and change as community needs evolved. Work sessions took place at the Staatsburg Firehouse with limited-sized groups. Community readers were able to take part in pre-school classrooms again at several sites. Planning meetings were held to find new ways to disseminate books and publicize the project. A committee was formed to develop a "tabling packet" in order to participate in area community days. 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, along with donated presents, at Hudson River Lodging. A grant from Stewart's Holiday Match funded the purchase of multi-cultural books. The Nora Roberts Foundation provided money for books and supplies. Additional funds were donated by the Wappingers Retired Teachers' Association, Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, and individual member donations. Since the Staatsburg Firehouse is now used by so many groups, a new location is being sought for storage and work sessions.

Distributions included Hudson River Lodging, Angels of Light, Day One Early Learning Center, Harriet Tubman Academic Skills Center, AgriBusiness Child Development Center, Holy Light Pentecostal Church, Rural and Migrant Ministry, Vassar Brothers Medical Center, Northern Dutchess Hospital, Vanderbilt Homeless Shelter, Christ Episcopal Church summer camp, Poughkeepsie City School District summer camp, Astor Early Childhood Centers, several migrant families, and R.E.A.L. Skills. When Vassar Brothers Medical Center could no longer accept Books for Babies packets, a new collaboration was formed with Northern Dutchess Hospital. Some Laundromat Libraries thrived and others were closed. Little Libraries were installed at Wappingers Central School District elementary schools, Astor Early Learning Centers, and the Christ Episcopal Church. The libraries are maintained by AAUW members and books are provided by the Friends of the Poughkeepsie Public Library District.

The project continues to have high member participation and several new members joined in order to participate. In all, 50,000 new books and countless used books have been distributed to local children over the course of the project.

Betty Harrel
Project Coordinator