

Books For Kids, Erie Chapter

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An affiliate of The Books For Kids Foundation, New York, NY

BFK Begins Project at Wayne

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Project To Run 2008-2012

For eighteen years, Books for Kids has been providing brand new high quality books to the children and youth of Erie County. In all that time, however, we have not targeted a particular group for an extended period of time to focus on improving the reading skills and attitudes of beginning readers.

All this is about to change. In what we believe is a pioneering effort for the Erie area, Books for Kids is partnering with First Book Erie, Mercyhurst College, Behrend College, and Edinboro University to concentrate on pupils and their parents at Wayne School.

At the center of this four year program is a pledge by Books for Kids and First Book Erie to provide at least six books per year, from kindergarten through fourth grade, beginning with the kindergarten classes of 2008 at Wayne. These students and those who come after them will continue to receive free books through the fourth grade. In all, some 4,100 books will be given to these students during the four years of the project.

However, providing free books is not all the project entails. Other aspects of the project include

- Daily in-class free reading

- Parental education
- Daily in-home reading
- Workshops and other events for parents.

Throughout the project, students' reading progress and, equally important, their attitudes toward reading, will be monitored and measured by Drs. Ruth Auld and Phillip Belifiore of Mercyhurst College, Dr. Dean Baldwin of Behrend College, and Dr. Mary Jo Melvin of Edinboro University.

What sets this project apart from many other studies is that it attempts to engage parents, teachers, students, and administrators in a focused effort at improving reading. Moreover, improvement in reading will not be measured by a single instrument or test but by a variety of measures, including classroom performance, in-home activities, and attitudes toward reading itself. Studies show that students who like to read become good readers. By focusing on all aspects of each student's reading growth, we hope to build not just technical skill but a genuine love of reading among the students and parents of Wayne School.

Watch these pages for updates on this exciting project!

Books for Kids, Erie Chapter

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Our VP Loves Erie

Alert readers of the Erie *Times-News* may have noted that Books for Kid's Vice-President, **Traci Teudhope**, published an essay on her love of Erie on July 18.

Although she is not an Erie native (She was born in Meadville and grew up in Ashtabula), Traci has become a big fan of her new home. We especially appreciated what she had to say about the many volunteers who help to make Erie what it is:

"It's because of the people with a vested interest in the well-being of our community that Erie will inevitably have a bright future. The community's many volunteers and professionals in the nonprofit sector dedicate their time, careers, and enthusiasm to ensuring our town's success."

In addition to extolling Erie's volunteer spirit, Traci emphasized the community's many cultural and entertainment offerings, its reputation as a great place to raise a family, and its leaders' "vision and focused perseverance."

Books for Kids salutes Traci for enthusiastic support of her adopted home and is proud to have her as its energetic Vice-President.

E. B. White's *Stuart Little*

One of the many books in our current supply is E. B. White's classic, *Stuart Little*.

As is true of so many books now considered classics, White's story of the diminutive mouse and his adventures faced still opposition when it was first published in 1945.

Oddly, the most vocal opposition came from Anne

Carroll Moore, a truly heroic figure in American children's literature. It was she who invented and championed the idea of a children's library and who founded the first one at the great New York Public Library in 1911. Almost everything we now associate with a library for children - from small chairs and desks to bright decor and storytellers - was her idea.

Miss Moore was a close friend of White's and constantly encouraged him to write a children's book. But when *Stuart* finally appeared, Moore disliked it intensely. She wanted "older" children to read established classics like Dickens and Austen; she disliked its humor, its bite, its lack of sentimentality. The book caused an irreparable rift between them.

This story, like so many we love, has a happy ending. *Stuart* overcame tepid reviews, neglect, and open opposition to find place in the hearts and minds of millions of children. To date, it has sold more than four million copies.

Readers who want the full story of Anne Carroll Moore, E. B. White and *Stuart Little* are encouraged to read "The Lion and the Mouse" by Jill Lepore in the July 21 issue of the *New Yorker*. It's a fascinating story about a little known aspect of our literary and cultural history.

PDS Updates

"The Electric Company"

Those of us who grew up with, or whose kids grew up with, both "Sesame Street" and "The Electric Company" will be glad to know that the latter has been revived in a new and more hip version.

Aimed at viewers aged 6-9, the

new show is set in a big city with a natural foods diner that serves as headquarters for "The Electric Company," four young super heroes who fight all kinds of evil and advocate healthy eating.

Along the way, the program will emphasize vocabulary building, phonics, and of course story-telling as an entertaining way to encourage reading among those early readers who must develop both skills and attitudes that foster good reading if they are to succeed in the upper grades and in life.

Books for Birthdays Revived

The Books for Birthdays program enables parents to choose up to three books a year for each child in the family as gifts for the children's birthdays or any other occasion.

Under the able guidance of board member **Jane Hackenberg**, two new sites have been opened and previous sites re-confirmed.

In all, we now have five outlets:

- The Erie Art House
- The International Institute
- The House of Mercy
- The John F. Kennedy Center
- Union City Family Services

We particularly like this aspect of our mission because it involves parents in promoting literacy and enables them to give their children new books and take credit for the gift. The child need not know that the book came from Books for Kids.

Many thanks to Jane for taking over this program and securing the new sites at the International House and House of Mercy.

Books from NYC

A few years ago, Dan Varo and the good people at Erie's Hardinger Transport brought us a much-needed shipment of books from our parent office in New York.

Well, they've done it again. Once again Dan arranged for a company truck to bring a skid of Books from the warehouse in Brooklyn.

We estimate that about 2,000 books and audio tapes were on that skid!

Many thanks to Dan and his crew at Hardinger for helping us bring great new books to Erie's children and youth!

Thanks to Donors!

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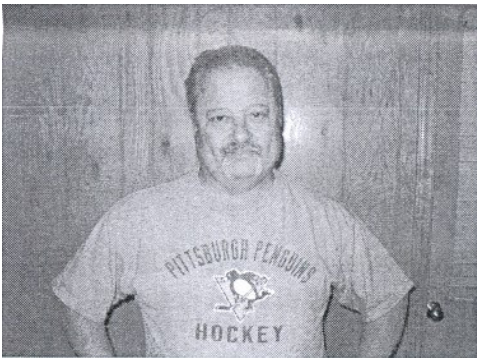
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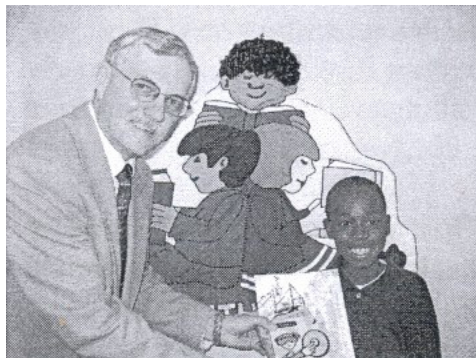
Dan Varo of Hardinger Transport



Brian Foht and His Truck



Dave Cadena, Brian Foht, and Juan Fernandez



Dean Baldwin Gives a Book to a St. John's/Holy Rosary Student

The Books for Kids Foundation, Erie Chapter
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