



The Lisa Libraries

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WISH LIST

Books

Now more than ever, our biggest need is simply for . . . new books. After the shutdown, donations to us slowed to a trickle as most of our friends in the publishing industry began working from home. But requests for books never stopped. Our shelves are emptying out. We need anything you can send us. Our greatest need is for Easy Readers and board books. Thank you!

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Dear Friends,

This is the first newsletter we've sent out in nearly a year, and its theme is, surprise, surprise, Covid and our country's "new normal." Thanks to the many generous donors who supply us with new books to distribute, the Lisa Libraries remained open except for the first two weeks of the shutdown. Although book donations quickly came to a halt, we had enough titles on our shelves to fulfill most of the requests that continued to come in. At first Ellen, our director, was the only one venturing into the office, somehow turning a huge job into a one-woman operation. Eventually I began working one day a week, and as I write this - hurrah - our volunteers have just started to return. Our space looks a bit different: large air purifier, Plexiglas® dividers between our desks, and of course everyone is masked. But we're back!

As you'll see on the next few pages,

the organizations receiving books from us over the last six months had to make changes in their programs as well. Summer reading programs switched to remote activities. A caring volunteer at an after-school program arranged for bags of books and supplies to be delivered to her now homebound students. And one innovative program was begun as a response to the crisis - by two incredible and enterprising teenagers.

As we step gingerly toward the end of the year, let's hope that the new normal will soon be our old normal.

Stay healthy. And thank you for your support, which ensured that we were able to continue to work during the most trying months many of us can remember.

Gratefully,

Ann Martin

Volunteer Corner

Valorie Todd joined the Lisa Libraries three years ago and quickly became a cherished member of our family. She's a whiz with the computer, with organizing (and reorganizing) our occasionally jumbled bookshelves, and has a talent for identifying problems and fixing them almost before anyone else has noticed them.

Val grew up on Staten Island, attended SUNY Oneonta majoring in elementary education, and earned a master's degree in Occupational Therapy from New York University. She married her husband Vern in 1978, and in 1989 they moved to Stone Ridge, NY, into a house built by Vern, where they raised their children, Jeremy and Elizabeth.

Val has worked as a pediatric OT in both hospital and school settings,

and also taught in the Rutgers Infant Specialist Program and the Mercy College Occupational Therapy Program. In 2013 she retired after 20 years from Kingston City Schools,

Consolidated. She has written - and been published - on the subject of visual perceptual problems in children with learning disabilities.

Val's passions are travel, embroidery, and spending time with her three grandchildren. We are lucky that this conscientious, kind, dedicated, and gifted volunteer found her way to the Lisa Libraries.



Amazing Teens

Everyone reacted differently when the Covid outbreak began. Many people wanted to do something to help. Some made masks. Some gathered supplies to be donated to frontline workers. Two high school students in Illinois had a very different idea. They wanted to help low-income children, and in a matter of months had launched their brainchild, Balance Boxes. What are Balance Boxes? In the words of Samantha Feinberg, one of the co-creators, each box provides a



Sydney Holubow & Samantha Feinberg child with the perfect balance of educational and fun activities. The boxes are themed (for example,

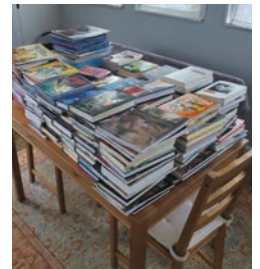
dinosaurs, princesses, science) and contain books, educational games and supplies, plus a toy or art project, along with kid-friendly snacks. Samantha and her co-founder Sydney Holubow, two amazing teens, partnered with many companies for donations - receiving over 200 books from the Lisa Libraries - and in just a few short months they and their team of young ambassadors across the country have given away nearly 2000 Balance Boxes. You go, girls!

Our New Normal

In March of this year, as the country went into quarantine and the Lisa Libraries was considering how to continue our work with a pared-down staff (i.e., mostly just Ellen), we approved a request for books from the Carolina Family Engagement Center. The goal of CFEC is to create programs and materials to empower families and schools, and to support the development of low-income students, homeless students, students in foster care, and

migrant students throughout South Carolina. Ellen put together a donation of 400 books and sent them off in seven boxes to the University of South Carolina. Several weeks later she received an email from Laurann Gallitto at CFEC saying that the boxes hadn't arrived. Many more emails revealed that, like so many schools across the country, the university had shut down. And the boxes had been turned away. No one could locate them. Eventually they

showed up, somewhat the worse for wear, back at the Lisa Libraries. Ellen repacked the boxes and sent them off again, this time to Laurann's home address. Now, most of our donations are sent to home addresses, and we've had a peek at what the Lisa Libraries' new normal might be.



Are Your Doors Open?

At the end of April, Ellen received an email from Jeanette May with the Christ Child Society in Albany, NY. In the past, Jeanette had approached the Lisa Libraries for a donation of books to a health center serving low-income and mainly bilingual children (70% of the clients are foreign born). Each young patient who visits the clinic is sent home with a book to keep. Now, with the quarantine in full swing, Jeanette wondered if our doors were open. She and her co-workers were busy making masks for the children, but the center was almost out of books. Grant applications had gone



unanswered, and donations of used books had slowed considerably. Ellen told her that the Lisa Libraries was indeed open, and we were happy to send off several boxes of brand-new board books, picture books, easy readers, and middle-grade

titles, many in Spanish. "Thank you," said Jeanette. "Be safe, be hopeful."



There's Always Room for a Book

Each summer Stephanie Morgan, Children's Librarian at the Kingston Library here in Kingston, NY, puts together an imaginative and interactive summer reading program for the city's youngsters. Like most programs across the country, this year's looks a bit different. As



Umbro family

Stephanie said, "It is very strange not to have parents and children streaming in and out all day and having live programs for all ages." Still, Stephanie managed to switch the regular events to online programming, and even put together her own weekly Crafts-to-Go kits for families to drop by and pick up. This summer, via Zoom, children could watch theater productions, learn about endangered and exotic animals, and even make their own mythical creatures. (Kingston families who didn't own computers were provided them when the schools switched to remote learning in March.) Where do the Lisa Libraries come in? We supplied the library with 185 books as reading rewards for participating



Stephanie & Ann

in the summer program. As Stephanie wrote in the library's flier, "Remember: There's always room for a book."

Yay, Captain Underpants!

At Chambers Elementary, a Title 1 school here in Kingston, NY, the after-school program sponsored by the Ulster Immigrant Defense Network was an oasis for thirty K - 4 English language learners – until Covid shut down the schools. The students, who are from Mexico and Central America, had been meeting once a week with volunteers for a healthy snack, homework help, a creative arts activity, and games. That came to a halt in March, and the students were isolated in homes with few toys or books. In order to brighten the days of the children, Jan Solow, a volunteer with the program, arranged for



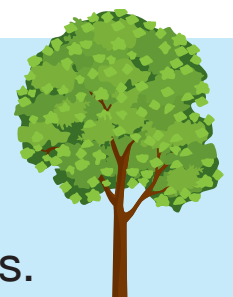
Jan

bags of books, art supplies, and games to be delivered to their homes. She turned to the Lisa Libraries for books, and Ellen put together a donation. Days later she received the following enthusiastic email from Jan:

We finally got our delivery of new books and activities out to our children yesterday. The bags were very heavy this go-round, thanks to the generous donation of books from the Lisa Libraries! The children were so excited to see what we'd brought them. Of course, Dogman and Captain Underpants were appreciated by all! Thanks a million.

Save a tree!

Please send your email address to Ellen at ellenlisalibraries@gmail.com so that we can send you paperless newsletters.



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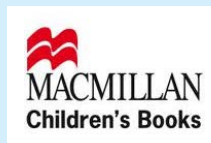
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