



December 8, 2009

Dear Rich Hallabrin,

On behalf of all the teachers, students and families in our school community; I am writing to express our gratitude for the 600 books we received as a result of your involvement with Toys for Tots Literacy Program. I also wanted to share some of the programming we've been able to implement thanks to your support.

Last month we held our first parent workshop. We had twenty of our second grade families come in to learn strategies for reading with their child. They were instructed on how to engage the child in the literary experience before, during and after reading the book. We also gave them a crash course on Bloom's Taxonomy and using different levels of questions to develop their students as critical thinkers. Being a workshop, parents practiced the strategies using the books from you. Each attending family took home 3 free books to continue working on these skills at home. Their feedback from the session was very positive and heartfelt. We also placed follow-up calls last week and found that they are still executing the practices learned at the session, and have seen great success. As a result, almost all of their students moved up a reading level this month!

This month we are hosting a similar workshop, but geared to families of third, fourth and fifth graders. We are actually holding three sessions and are expecting a total of 60 families to attend. They will also get to leave with a few of the chapter books that were part of the donations.

Additionally, we have used the books as incentives. Students embodying life skills like assertiveness, responsibility, self-control and cooperation are given the opportunity to select a book of their choosing to take home.

Last July when I completed the application, these parent workshops were a lofty goal of mine. I never dreamt that they would become a reality. Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to educate our community about family literacy and even provide them with the tools and resources they need. Thank you again for your support!

With heartfelt appreciation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heather Brandon", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Heather Brandon
Literacy Specialist
Aspire Titan Academy