

Education NEWS & NOTES

Dictionary Project Gives Students The Gift Of Words

"Thank you for the dictionary. I am grateful for the gift. I appreciate it. It is a useful book. Thank you for believing in me."

—Stephen, Grade 3

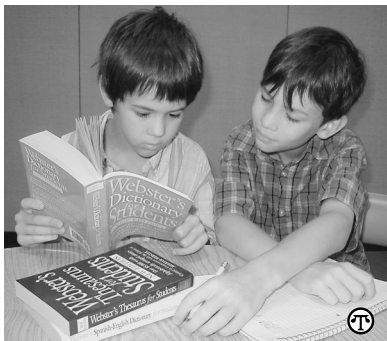
(NAPSA)—Communities with active service groups across the country are in a unique position to provide children like Stephen with a vital learning tool that's easy to use and builds confidence and curiosity while developing their reading skills...all with the simple gift of a donated Webster's Dictionary.

The Dictionary Project began when South Carolina mom Mary French set a goal to raise funds to donate a dictionary to every third-grade student in the state. She saw a dramatic need to provide assistance to children at the critical age when they make the transition from learning to read to reading to learn.

Students in the early school years learn about 3,000 new words each year. "Children crave words when they're in the third grade," says French. "They're expanding their frame of reference. With this project, we are putting words into children's hands and the results are astounding."

Since the Project began 13 years ago, nearly 8 million dictionaries have been given to students locally through Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs and other service organizations nationwide.

Deborah Hastings, publisher of Federal Street Press, a division of Merriam-Webster, believes these projects have far-reaching effects.



Through a national initiative, service organizations are helping third-grade students learn with their own personal dictionaries.

She and her team supply affordable, brightly-colored paperback dictionaries (as well as thesauruses and atlases) to service groups that present them to students in the communities where they live.

"A group may choose to donate to a single classroom, or to every third grade in their town or city. The kids are thrilled because they each have a dictionary that is theirs to keep. The fact that most groups donate year after year tells me that their effort is rewarded by the response of the kids, their teachers and their families who all benefit," says Hastings. "We are proud that we are continuing in the tradition of Noah Webster, who saw the dictionary as a learning tool that opens up the world to children through language."

For more information on how your organization can donate dictionaries in your community, visit www.federalstreetpress.com/dpd.