

TFRW Conference Call June 2008 Literacy Program

Hello, ladies!

Thank you for taking part in the Literacy Program Conference Call today.

Before we get started, I'd like to remind you to refer to the Literacy pages on the TFRW website. On the left hand side of the screen, scroll down to *TFRW Programs* and then click on *Literacy Program*. We have twelve (12) pages of information to help you begin or expand your Literacy Projects. **If you do not have computer access, please call me and I will send you a complete set of these documents. My phone number is 979-247-4591.**

My contact information is correct on the TFRW website. If you are using the Literacy Program information in the TFRW handbook that was mailed to you earlier this year, please update my contact information and also make note that there are new reporting forms available online. Contact me at:

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TFRW has three (3) projects that we encourage our clubs to participate in. These projects will earn your club valuable points in the Community Relations/Community Service section of the **TFRW John Goodwin Tower Award of Excellence** and the **NFRW Achievement Award**.

THINK ABOUT LITERACY PROJECTS IN A NEW WAY

Of course these are wonderful community service projects. But they also enhance the presence of all Republicans in your community. The positive publicity generated from these donations will provide a platform to introduce your club to your neighbors. They are a great recruiting opportunity to reach out into your community and invite conservative women that may be young mothers, school employees, retired teachers or avid readers to join your club and bring their enthusiasm!

Our goal as Republican Women is to get Republicans elected! Some of us live in areas where electing Republicans is not a difficult task. Others of us live in areas where there are few, if any, elected Republicans. Literacy and education are important hallmarks of what Republicans stand for. Let these wonderful projects speak for themselves and for your club!

If you haven't yet appointed a Literacy Chair, please do so!

The first project I'd like to tell you about is the:

TFRW BARBARA BUSH LITERACY LIBRARY PROJECT (BLLP)

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy was founded by our former First Lady on March 6, 1989. Since that time the foundation has awarded nearly \$20 million to build or expand over six hundred family literacy programs in forty-seven states. Local clubs are encouraged to donate at least ten (10) books to local libraries, schools, or shelters in support of the BLLP.

There is not a list of specific books from which you are required to choose. Your selections, though, should represent family interests. Many clubs select children's books to donate. Some obvious choices include **Read All About It!** the new book by Laura & Jenna Bush or Jenna's book **Ana's Story** for older teens. Second Lady Lynne Cheney has written several patriotic and historical books for children that are wonderful, including **America: A Patriotic Primer** and **A is for Abigail: An Almanac of Amazing American Women**.

Another popular choice for donation to elementary schools is the **Mice Way to Learn About Government** books by Peter and Cheryl Barnes. The Barnes' have been guests at several of our conventions and offer a 50% discount to Republican Women clubs. The set of four books includes **Woodrow, the White House Mouse; House Mouse, Senate Mouse; Marshall the Courthouse Mouse** and **A Mice Way to Learn About Government Curriculum Guide** that helps teachers explain the concepts introduced in these books. Educators love this series! See the books at their website, www.vspbooks.com . Call them for a quote and be sure to tell them you are purchasing the books for a Republican Women club to donate.

Once the book or books have been selected, print and fill out the BBLP bookplate request form from our website. Please use the new form on our website, not the one in the TFRW handbook. Return the form to me (either snail-mail or scan and email) and I will provide BBLP bookplates that are to be placed in the books before they are donated. There is a place on these bookplates for your club name. The request form also acts as a reporting form and we are now collecting the title and author of the books being donated so we can provide suggested titles in the future.

Several clubs hold book drives to collect used books. After placing the BBLP bookplate inside, the books are then passed on in various ways. Public and school libraries and will accept used books in good condition. Children's books can be donated to Head Start who present them to underprivileged children. Leave some in Doctor or Dentist waiting rooms (with permission, of course).

Keep in mind, when you attach your bookplate to any of these books you are recommending the book and its author!

Our second project is the:

NFRW MAMIE EISENHOWER LIBRARY PROJECT (MELP)

Mamie Eisenhower Library Project was established in 1961 by the National Federation of Republican Women to honor the former First Lady. Its purpose is to foster Republican philosophy and ideas through the donation of subject related books and videos to libraries, schools, or other institutions. Local clubs are encouraged to donate at least one book each year through this project. The books donated must be chosen from the official MELP list. New titles are added to the existing list each year in early spring so feel free to select books from prior lists. The 2008 list is available on our website and offers a broad array of subjects and authors.

As before, once the book or books have been selected, print and fill out the MELP bookplate request form from our website. Return the form and you will be provided with MELP bookplates that are to be placed in the books before they are donated. There is a place on these bookplates, as well, for your club name.

These projects are easy, inexpensive and provide positive publicity for your club.

There are four (4) simple steps:

- Select your books
- Request the bookplates
- Make the donation
- Send out a press release.

As you work toward fulfilling the requirements of the John Goodwin Tower Award, keep in mind that you must make donations in both **2008 and 2009** for either or both BBLP and MELP.

TFRW President Toni Anne Dashiell has suggested that clubs might make a BBLP or MELP donation on a monthly basis in lieu of a gift for club speakers. Select a book that has relevance or significance to the speaker and have them autograph it at your meeting. Then donate the book to your local library. This would be a considerable honor for your speaker, especially if they are TFRW officers or elected officials. Be sure to get pictures of the speaker with the book and at the actual donation for your press release.

Our most recently added and final project is the:

TFRW DICTIONARY PROJECT

There is a very special charity (a 501c3) in South Carolina called The Dictionary Project. It was started with the goal of providing third grade students with their very own personal dictionary. In January 2003 the TFRW Board, at the recommendation of then-President Gail Suttle, voted to implement the Dictionary Project throughout Texas as one of our community outreach initiatives. In the first year of the program, forty-six clubs participated and donated twenty thousand dictionaries.

If you have not participated in this project, you will love it. If you've tried it and didn't think it was a good fit, please try it again. On the charities website you will find some great information on the positive impact this project brings to student test scores and reading abilities that remain evident as these children become fourth and fifth graders. Their web address is www.dictionaryproject.org.

The Dictionary Project provides five dictionaries to choose from but only two are encyclopedic versions. Please consider presenting only these two encyclopedic dictionaries to your schools and let the school choose the one best suited to the academic level of their students. One is **A Student's Dictionary**, published by The Dictionary Project. This is the choice of most public schools and costs \$1.70 each. The second is Webster's **Special Encyclopedic Edition**. It tends to be the choice of more academically advanced public and private schools and costs \$2.00 each. These books include much more information than the other dictionaries offered: Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, maps, sections on U.S. Presidents, planets, states, even Braille and sign language. These 500+ page, nicely printed, paper back books are treasured by their young owners and appreciated by the teachers.

After the choice of dictionary is made, they are ordered directly from the Dictionary Project at their website or by telephone. Local clubs provide their own bookplates which can be easily printed on a home computer or by a local print shop.

Schedule a classroom presentation and show them how to use their new dictionary. Teachers appreciate this and will look forward to your lesson each year. Invite an elected official to be part of the presentation. Teachers will call asking when you will be bringing the dictionaries!! Make sure they realize that this is a gift to the students and the book is theirs to keep. Unfortunately, on a least one occasion, this was not understood and the school kept the books as a classroom resource.

These dictionaries are the ultimate investment in the future. The third graders you give a dictionary to will be voters in two election cycles. Their parents are voters THIS YEAR. The bookplate you place in the front of each book will remind these children, each time they use it, that Republican Women Care.

I am issuing a challenge to every club in Texas to make a commitment to provide dictionaries to at least one school for two or more years. Being consistent with the donation, year after year to the same school, is the key to the success of this project as teachers and younger siblings look forward to your annual presentation.

Consider making your donation at the beginning of the school year. It will become a resource that the teacher knows each child has at home. **For many students this will become the first reference book in their home and will be used by the entire family!** Make sure to leave a copy for the teacher and an extra copy or two for any new students. One school modified its lesson plan on U.S. Presidents to coincide with the information in the dictionary given by Republican Women.

On the TFRW website, you will find examples of an introductory letter to school administration, bookplate, presentation guidelines, press release and tips from successful clubs. A donation reporting form is also provided. Be creative and have fun with this project. You will be delighted with the genuine appreciation these children will show when they receive their dictionaries. Many schools will forward thank-you letters that will touch you. I have seen more than one saying this was the first book in their home!

This is a great project and several service groups (Rotary, DAR and Kiwanis) also participate. To avoid duplication, The Dictionary Project has a registry of organizations that provide books in each county. If another group provides books for the school/schools in your area, consider the outreach opportunity of taking this project to a minority or low-income school nearby.

Some clubs personalize the dictionary by handwriting some words of encouragement such as “Readers are leaders!” or “Have a great school year!” and adding their signature below the bookplate. Make sure your club mailing address is on your bookplate! Add a “Republican Women Care” sticker or include a pen or pencil.

Most importantly, publicize your presentation. Find out, in advance, how your schools prefer to handle publicity. Many schools will ask the local paper to cover the presentation and others will provide a press release to the media. Be sure to take a camera in case the media doesn’t show up so you can submit your own press release. Keep in mind that some children will not have parental permission to be included in publicity photos. Your schools will have this information.

HOW DO WE PAY FOR THIS?

Fundraising is not always a fun experience but when you ask people to support your literacy efforts, you will be amazed how quickly you will reach, or surpass, your goal!

- Establish a literacy fund to use for covering the costs associated with the BBLLP, MELP, Dictionary Project, scholarships, etc. The earmarked funds could be used for purchasing books, printing Dictionary Project bookplates, creating bookmarks or even paying for publicity if needed.
- Ask local professionals, business people and civic leaders to financially support your literacy efforts. PAC restrictions prevent us from accepting donations from corporations but a donation from the *individual* is acceptable. This can be a very successful letter writing campaign that does not involve selling. These are projects that everyone likes to support and likes to get recognition for supporting! A sample donation request letter is on our website.
- Thank your donors in a newspaper display ad or include their names in your press release. Invite them to be present when you make the donation and be included in the photo.
- Create bookmarks or sponsor a bookmark design contest. Be sure to include your club name, address and the names of your literacy donors for the year.

Encourage your members to dress up a bit and wear red when you make book donations and dictionary presentations. Colorful photos often find their way to the front page of local publications!

September is National Literacy Month. Start planning now for your Literacy Month Project. And I hope it includes dictionaries and third graders!

We hope you have learned something new today. If your club has a unique way of handling your literacy efforts, please share it with us.

If I can be of any assistance, please let me know.
Thank you for your time,
Brenda McCullough
TFRW Literacy Chairman