

## Grandview Community Children Benefit from Wal-Mart Grant

Grant funds are allowing the Eastern Owyhee County District Library to provide programs for young children through teens and engage the community at a level their small staff had not been able to undertake in the past. Prior to receiving a \$10,000 mini-grant through the “Strengthening Library Services for Youth in Idaho” Wal-Mart grant program, the library had not been able to offer any weekly programs for any age groups. Now the library has established three regular programs, plus a monthly outreach visit to the local daycare.



Library Director Kathy Chick says the community of Grandview and the surrounding area has benefitted from the programs and resources provided through the grant. The most popular program so far has been their “Learning Ever After” weekly after school activities for ages 5-12. The library is located near the school and they get about 12 to 15 energetic kids who arrive ready for activities and some book-related projects each Monday after school. Kathy has designed games, crafts, and other creative ideas to keep the kids

coming back for more. Guest visitors help out from time to time and she’s hoping to enlist the support of the local 4-H group and others in the community. The photo above shows the after-school crowd playing a game before moving into the program room.

The library’s “Little Learners” program provides music, movement, puppets, fingerplays, and other fun activities tied to books for children from birth to age-five and their parents. Although attendance at this program has been a little lower than expected, Kathy believes that those who are showing up are getting some great information and that the program will continue to attract parents who are looking for educational opportunities for their young children. “We had offered the Every Child Ready to Read program here and had a positive response. Getting families to attend on a regular basis is an ongoing challenge, but we’re getting there.”

Grandview resident Lori Barth attends the Little Learners program with her son and she has two daughters who attend the weekly after school programs. “It’s great to have something for the kids to do that’s educational, free, and I don’t have to drive to Mountain Home or Boise to take part in it. The kids enjoy it and I’m always amazed



*Grandview resident Lori Barth and her son Jonathan sing along during the library’s Little Learners program.*

at what Mrs. Chick comes up with each week to share with the kids. I know it's a lot of work and she has some really fun things for them to do and always comes through for them," Lori said.

One of the unexpected results of the grant project has been the community interest in Wii programs. "We purchased a Wii for our new teen programs and it turns out the adults like it just as much as the teens. In fact we have a community-wide bowling league and there are two adult teams who come in regularly to play and post their new scores for all to see. They are having a blast with it."

Kathy had planned quarterly activities with teens and their parents like a "Dinner with Dad" or "Make-n-Take with Mom." Turns out neither the teens nor the parents were too thrilled with the idea of doing programs together. "We thought it would be nice to give parents a chance to spend some time interacting with their teens, but they're used to dropping them off and the teens were ready to be dropped off! It was a live and learn thing," she said. Kathy said they are not getting as many teens involved in the programs as they had hoped, but they'll be trying some other activities based on feedback they've been gathering.

Over 60 percent of the grant funds were budgeted for personnel. Planning the programs for these different age groups, doing the programs, cleaning up, preparing grant reports, evaluations, and managing the grant budget takes a lot of time. Unless she's presenting a program or doing prep and clean up, she's often the only staff person in the library, which makes getting everything done a challenge. "We had planned to have two other people spending additional time each week working on these projects, but the board made some decisions and we had some other issues come up and it just hasn't worked

out." Kathy usually works 22-23 hours per week and another staff member puts in about 19 hours. The remaining grant funds are being used for equipment, supplies, snacks and program materials, publicity, and books and other library materials.



*A "Little Learners" participant looks through a book that was read during the program.*

"There just isn't much for kids and families to do around here that is safe and allows them to learn and be creative. These children and teens are the future and we want them to know we are interested in them and their ideas. We want them to have access to educational opportunities and help them be successful," Kathy said. "I think these programs will make a big difference."