

Rotarians provide dictionaries to local students

Recently, Shelburne Rotarians Bill Roy, Real Gagnon and Fred Knetsch distributed 165 dictionaries/thesauruses to Grade 3 students at Hyland Heights Elementary, Primrose Public School, Glenbrook Elementary School, and Centennial Hylands Elementary. This is part of an international Rotary project to distribute dictionaries to students.

The goal of this program is to assist all students in becoming good writers, active readers, creative thinkers, and resourceful learners by providing them with their own personal dictionary. The dictionaries are a gift to each student to use at school and at home for years to come.

?We chose third grade as the year to give dictionaries to students for two reasons. The first is practical: third grade is the year in which dictionary skills are taught in most schools. The second is no less practical, but broader in scope: third grade represents a critical juncture in a child's education. This is the year a student makes the transition from learning to read to reading to learn. All formal education from this point through college is premised upon the student being able to read and to understand what he or she reads?.

Why a paper dictionary in the digital age? It is still likely that almost one in ten American children do not have access to a computer at home. Children in minority ethnic groups or low-income households are much less likely to have a computer at home. Even for children with computer access, a dictionary provides benefits a computer cannot. Dictionaries are portable and can be used anywhere. A child has a sense of ownership of a book that encourages exploration. And only a dictionary can provide that delightful experience of looking up a word and getting sidetracked by all the other fascinating words on the same page.