

The Macomb Daily

Chippewa Valley seeks to provide Christmas in March with book drive

Holiday deal-seekers encouraged to add children's books to their lists



Chippewa Valley Schools is currently hosting a For the Love of Reading book drive. Books are accepted now through Jan. 13, 2023. Pictured are students at Fox Elementary School in Macomb Township enjoying some of the books collected via last year's drive. (PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIANA LEWIS, DIANE BLAIN)

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Chippewa Valley Schools (CVS) is encouraging holiday deal-seekers to add children's books to their Black Friday lists this year, so that the district may provide Christmas in March to local kids.

The district's second annual For the Love of Reading book drive began on Oct. 17 and will conclude on Jan. 13. The district is seeking new books for first graders. Books at reading levels from first to third grade will be accepted so that recipients can enjoy them for years to come, according to CVS ELA Curricular Leader Juliana Lewis. Lewis is the drive's organizer.

"We selected first grade for a variety of reasons," Lewis said. "Children are learning to read in the early grade levels, so receiving a new book of their own along that journey can be a powerful support of reading. First grade is also the first compulsory year of schooling in Michigan."

CVS Director of School / Community Relations Diane Blain said that books are being collected in schools, but that the community may contribute by dropping off books at a designated drop off

box in the district administration building. The CVS administration building is located at 19120 Cass Ave. in Clinton Township.

Donations are also encouraged via the following Scholastic link, the use of which will send books directly to the book drive: orders.scholastic.com/Z4WHM. Books purchased via this method will also earn points, which can be used for the drive to obtain additional books. Donors enter their own names instead of a student's name, and choose first grade. With orders of \$25, a free \$5 book can be selected with the code READS.

Books collected during the book drive will be distributed for free to CVS first graders during March is Reading Month.

“The curricular leaders and first grade teachers will be holding assemblies in each elementary school in the month of March,” Lewis said. “We will distribute the books to the students during these short, fun events.”

Lewis said that the book drive was first held last year due to a comment made by a student during the online learning phase of the pandemic.

“There is research that indicates the number of books in a child's home correlates to that child's academic success,” Lewis said. “During the online learning of the pandemic, one of our elementary teachers asked her students to read a line from their favorite book in their home. When it was time to share, one student stated that she couldn't read a line from a book because she did not have any books at home. This interaction inspired the For the Love of Reading Book Drive. We wanted to make sure that every student in Chippewa Valley Schools had at least one book in their home.”

The first CVS For the Love of Reading book drive was held in the spring of the 2020-21 school year, and collected 1,063 books for first graders.

“During the first drive, we were very inspired and eager to make a change. We decided to collect books during the end of that school year, 2020-2021, to pass out during the beginning of the following school year, 2021-2022. For this drive, we have decided that it would be better to pass out the books in the same school year as they are collected,” Lewis said.

The decision to end the donation period in January will allow district staff time to sort and review books, or purchase additional books if needed, according to Lewis.