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Got books?

Girl Scout troop collecting for new library

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Enterprise writer*

The library at the Everett School District's newest school is off to a good start, thanks to the work of Girl Scout Troop 981.

The fifth-graders are collecting books for Forest View Elementary School's library as part of their Bronze Award project, the highest award a junior scout can earn.

As of Friday, April 20, the troop had collected 3,312 books, many more than they had originally anticipated.

"Our goal was 2,000," said troop member Emily Gouveia, 11. The girls added that their original goal was 500 books, but after reaching that in two days, they set their sights a little higher.

The troop was looking for a community service project to do as part of the requirements for the Bronze Award when one of the parents suggested the book drive for the new elementary school, where troop member Kiersten Armstrong's little brother will be attending in the fall. The group liked the idea and began planning the project.

The book drive started as a competition at Cedar Wood Elementary, where most of the girls attend school, and expanded to include collection sites at different businesses throughout Mill Creek, including Albertsons, University Bookstore and the Mill Creek Library.

The winning class at Cedar Wood will receive a free pizza party from Alfy's and will be joined at their party by Cedar Wood principal Jill Tokumoto.

Eleven-year-old Mary Charleson said that so far, the troop has received "mostly primary books, but we're trying to get more intermediate books."

If the troop receives books that aren't appropriate for the school library, such as religious books, they donate them elsewhere.

"If there's coloring books, we'll donate those to Deaconess Hospital," said Quinn Michael, 10.

The troop is looking for new and gently used books for the new school.



Enterprise/JOCELYN ROBINSON

Girl Scout Troop 981 shows off some of the books they've collected so far. Troop members are: (back row, from left) Kiersten Armstrong, Quinn Michael, Anna Johnson, Jacie Barich, Ria Hofmann, Brittney Burgan; (front row, from left) Danielle Bernhard, Mary Charleson, Katie Flom, Francesca Cook, and Emily Gouveia. Not pictured: Hannah Christie.

"Most of them are gently used," said Francesca Cook, 10.

After they collect the donations from the classrooms and around town, the girls then sort the books.

"We barcode them into the computer," said 11-year-old Danielle Bernhard, adding that they'll also type in the title, author and comments about the book.

Sometimes they also have to clean the books, which includes removing blank pages at the front of the books that may have been written on, removing stickers and other minor maintenance work.

The troop will collect books at Cedar Wood Elementary until April 30. "Then we're going to keep on going till June" at other locations, said Brittney Burgan, 11.

The girls have also made the book drive into a contest for other Girl Scout troops. The winning troop will receive a root beer float party, paid for out of the girls' fund from selling cookies.

The troop said they feel great about the project.

"I think it's fun being helpful to the other school, so they can start off with a lot of books," Mary said.

The troop made sure to meet with Forest View planning principal Brenda Fuglevand to make sure their donation was going to be welcome.

"The new school principal was hip with it," said Jacie Barich, 10. "She was really excited."

Sonja Johnson, the mother of troop member Anna Johnson, said the girls have mostly managed this project on their own, from planning and making decisions to asking local businesses for donations and collection sites.

The troop said they decided to put donation boxes at places where people visit on a regular basis, hoping that people would remember to bring books on their next visit.

"We asked the store managers if they would let us place a book drive box at their location," said Kiersten, 11, adding that the troop checks for donations every week.

To earn their Bronze Award, the girls have to keep track of their community service hours -- which includes collecting and organizing the books, planning the project and cleaning the books -- and many have already exceeded the 15-hour requirement for the award.

The books are stored at the girls' houses for now.

"After we're all done, we're going to store them in my garage," 10-year-old Ria Hoffman said, a site the parents jokingly referred to as "the garage mahal."

The girls are confident they can collect at least 5,000 books before their drive is over. After all, they've received more than 3,000 books and "we've only been collecting for two weeks," Katie Flom, 10, said.

"We're already halfway to 6,000 and we have till June," Anna Johnson, 11, added.