



BOOKLOVE

F O U N D A T I O N

Choice Inspires Reading

The Book Love Foundation is pleased to announce that it has awarded its 35th classroom library this year. Since 2013 the Book Love Foundation has given \$141,000 in grants for books to classroom teachers. Ten libraries were awarded to middle and high school English Language Arts teachers from the United States and Canada in 2016.

We granted 500-book classroom libraries to:

Jake Casey, a middle and high school teacher in rural Bellevue, Michigan. His enthusiasm for creating reading lives that last is unstoppable. When asked to describe his teaching position he said, "Beautifully orchestrated collaboration between teacher and students to enhance positivity of reading and writing through modeling and choice."

Jill Cooper, a high school teacher at an alternative school with no school library or librarian in Manitoba, Canada. She is deeply connected to the needs and challenges of her students and chooses books that help them cope and rise above those challenges.

Kelsey Curlett, a high school teacher in rural Zeeland, Michigan. Kelsey presents at state conferences and said, "Providing me with this grant won't just help me and my students, it has the potential to change our school climate."

Jake Eismeier, a high school teacher in Decatur, Georgia is also the school coordinator for both the Latino Youth Leadership Academy and for a two-year research project with the University of Georgia. A creative thoughtful teacher, he has been working to provide mini-libraries in area apartment complexes.

Colin Flynn, a high school teacher in Union, Missouri. He was nominated by one of our board members who was entranced by his history of moving from being a book 'snob' to watching his autistic son fall in love with *Bad Kitty*; since that day he has made choice reading the center of his work. He said, "We are a community of readers and we live our reading lives together."

Wendy Gassaway, a middle school intervention teacher in Forest Grove, Oregon. Wendy is one of three winners on the list this year who has applied for a Book Love grant more than once. Wendy's stories of students who have always struggled with reading, but now find joy in it, inspired us all.

Austin Hall, a high school teacher in West Des Moines, Iowa, has creatively built a rich classroom library while also applying for a Book Love grant each year. He proposed a grade 12 elective course called Reading for Pleasure, which now has 201 students enrolled. He said, "It's been amazing to witness so many disenfranchised young adults become readers once again."

Michael Simental, a high school teacher from Salem, Oregon. Michael says his biggest challenge is motivating kids to read when they are worried about the electricity being turned off, food not being available, family being in jail, or having to work to support their families. It's an enormous challenge that Michael overcomes year after year.

Dawn Taylor, a middle school teacher in Murphysboro, Illinois. Dawn's high energy has engaged the community in reading trivia nights, Skype sessions with authors, and the Million Words Club, which she designed to encourage her students to sustain interest in reading.

Shondra Walker, a high school teacher at a charter school in St. Delano, California. Her students are field workers with no access to any library. There is no school library, so she serves as the school's literacy specialist, instructional coach, and mentors new teachers. Shondra's belief in the power of literacy is contagious.

The mission of the Book Love Foundation is to help teachers engage all students in reading. Each of these teachers will receive a 500-book library of titles. Penny Kittle, President and Founder of the Book Love Foundation explains, "The Foundation works with Booksource to select books which cover a wide range of genres that are of high interest to student readers," said Kittle. "The books are then chosen by the grant winner from our curated list of hundreds of titles."

"Each of our grant winners has demonstrated a commitment to developing a rich reading life in even the most reluctant readers. Most of our grant winners teach in high poverty areas, and all of our grant winners have spent their own money to purchase books to build their libraries," reported Kittle. "We want to support their hard work and their dedication to their students."

"Research has repeatedly shown that students who are given choice in reading and time to read increase their interest in books, improve their vocabulary and are better prepared for the challenges of post-secondary education," notes Kittle.

Penny Kittle has extensive experience in this field, having written seven books on the teaching of reading and writing with her publisher, Heinemann. Her book *Write Beside Them* won the James N. Britton award from the National Council of Teachers of English in 2009, and she spends half of each year consulting domestically and internationally with schools seeking to improve their reading and writing instruction. She teaches English at Kennett High School in North Conway, NH each fall semester. She was awarded the 2015 Exemplary Leader Award from the Conference on English Leadership of the National Council of Teachers of English.

The Book Love Foundation received 140 grant applications in 2016 from across the United States and Canada. In addition to the granting of ten classroom libraries, the Foundation also awarded six grants of \$500 each to be used to augment the classroom libraries already started by:

James Eady, a middle school teacher in Sudbury, Ontario.

Annie Kim Sytsma, a middle school teacher in Cedar Springs, Michigan.

Jennifer Connolly, a high school teacher in Granite City, Illinois.

Rebecca Lyons, a middle school teacher in South Mountain Home, Idaho.

Jessica Mankowski, a middle school teacher in Keansburg, New Jersey.

Lauren Deal, a high school teacher in the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

"The Book Love Foundation is grateful for the on-going support of Booksource and Heinemann Publishing, two of our primary benefactors, who have each donated a full library each year. In addition, Booksource provides all shipping costs and deeply discounted prices for books, allowing us to stretch our donations as far as possible," stated Kittle.

For more information on this year's winners, or to help the foundation meet our ambitious goals for all readers, please visit www.BookLoveFoundation.org.